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CHRIST AND LABOUR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE OPPRESSION OF THE POOR
THE CLAIM FOR INDEPENDENCE
NON-CO-OPERATION
INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA
THE DRINK AND OPIUM EVIL
HOW INDIA CAN BE FREE
INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

CHRIST AND LABOUR

BY

C. F. ANDREWS

AUTHOR OF
"THE RENAISSANCE IN INDIA," ETC.

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HANDS OFF NEW
YANKEE

TO THE

SOCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL

WORKERS

AT

SURUL FARM SANTINIKETAN

PREFACE

MY thanks are due to the Editor of the *Young Men of India* for allowing me to publish in book form these chapters which have, with few exceptions, appeared as articles in that magazine. The latter part of the book contains new material, and the whole has been carefully revised and in a measure rewritten.

It is my hope that the book, as it now stands, may be found useful for the purpose of social study circles, as well as by individual readers. The attempt has been made, in each chapter, to take a single subject and to give an outline rather than a complete picture. The illustrations used have been mainly gathered from India.

As I have related in the book itself, at the beginning of the first chapter, much of the detail was collected at an earlier period of my life, while I was studying at Cambridge and also working among the English poor. The facts I then gathered were embodied in an essay, printed at my own cost, nearly twenty years ago. The essay has now been long out of print. Therefore I felt that I could freely use the historical data that it contained. I wish to express my gratitude to Messrs Methuen & Co. for granting me permission to do so.

I have ventured to dedicate this book to the

social workers at Surul in Bengal who are endeavouring to find a solution of the problem of village agriculture and village economics in India. They form the social and agricultural section of our Visvabharati, or International University, at Santiniketan.

Of all the labour problems in the East, whether in India or China, this problem of village agriculture and reconstruction appears to me to be the greatest. On its solution depends, in a very large measure, the peace of the world.

In republishing this book in England, in a slightly larger form, I have borne in mind the fact that my illustrations and examples have been taken chiefly from India and Africa and the Far East. But I have ventured to think, that this will be rather an advantage than otherwise for my English readers. They may be able to view things more dispassionately, when thus seen from a distance. At the same time, these very illustrations may bring vividly home to them the world-wide character of the dangers with which we are now brought face to face, and the necessity for nothing short of a world solution.

I trust that two further purposes may be served. It will be seen at once by any careful reader how vitally connected these labour problems are with true missionary work. Some time ago I was asked in a letter by an earnest young student, what was the best preparation for work as a missionary abroad in India. My reply to him was, that he should leave books on India altogether

on one side for the time being, and study intimately and closely the labour questions in his own country from the highest Christian standpoint. Later on, the same person wrote to me from India, that he had taken my advice and had afterwards found out from his own experience its value.

Secondly, it is my deepest hope of all that this book may have power to make living to some, at least, of my readers the study of the Bible itself. In my own experience I have felt again and again the truth of these words of the aged Ignatius, 'Now I am *beginning* to be a disciple.' The words of Christ, recorded in the New Testament, are 'spirit' and 'life.' If I have been able, even in the slightest degree, to interpret them more intimately to any fellow disciple, then all that I have dared to hope to do by means of this book will have been accomplished.

C. F. ANDREWS

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THE ROMAN WORLD

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF SLAVERY

I PROPOSE first of all to consider the relation of the religion of Christ to the labour problems of the past, and then, proceeding from acknowledged facts, to infer what is likely to be its distinctive contribution to the future.

I shall draw largely on material which I had collected many years ago, when I was living in the midst of the Labour Movement in England among the poor people in the slums of Birmingham, Sunderland, and London. My aim will be always to reach forward to the peculiar problems which now confront us in India; but my facts will necessarily be drawn in a great measure from the West, where the religion of Christ has been leavening the masses of the people for many centuries.

When the Christian faith entered the world, the Jews were sunk in narrow bigotry, party intrigue, and national decay. Rivalries and jealousies within the Jewish community were only less bitter than the intense hatred of the foreigner which their religion itself fostered. Greek influence, in its decline after the death of Alexander the Great, had been spreading luxury and immorality with

far more fatal speed than enlightenment and learning. The greed of money, which coincided with the growth of immorality, had infected the Jews themselves. The Roman provincial rule, though bestowing an outward peace, was harsh and overbearing. On the Jewish side, one of the darkest features was the fanatical religious tyranny of the rich Jews over the poor. The wealthy Pharisees neglected the duty of tender consideration for the sufferings of the poor, and insisted on the exact letter of the Law being kept by the poor, who had not the time and the means to keep it.

"This people of the earth, which keepeth not the law, is accursed."

It was in terms such as these that the Pharisees and the Sadducees spoke of the poorer people of their own race and nation. How great the oppression of the poor was, may be seen from the Epistle of St James :—

"Go to now, ye rich, howl and weep for your miseries that shall come upon you.

"Your riches are corrupted : your garments are moth-eaten.

"Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat into your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped up treasure together for the last days.

"Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which is kept back by you by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

"Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been

wanton : ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

" Ye have condemned and slain the Just One ; and he doth not resist you."

It was before this religious world of conflicting bigotries and passions and greeds that Christ had appeared with his message. He came from His own hill-village of Nazareth, where He had lived the simple life of a carpenter, to the wealthy cities on the shore of the Sea of Galilee,—Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum.

These newly built cities were the direct outgrowth of the imperial system of the Roman Government, just as Calcutta and Rangoon, Bombay and Madras, are the products of British rule in India, in our own days. The Roman officials were there, with their headquarters at Capernaum, collecting the taxes and dispensing Roman justice. The Greek and Jewish capitalists were everywhere present making fortunes out of the oppression of the common people. There was immense wealth ; there was unbounded luxury ; but the truth all the while was this, that the countryside had become depleted in order to provide for the pleasures and vices of the rich. The village peasantry in Galilee, among whom Jesus lived, were bearing their daily burden of hunger, misery and want, while profiteering went on unabashed and unashamed ; while rich men clothed themselves in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

Archæologists have discovered in our own times

the marble pillars, the tessellated pavements, and the decorated porticos of the Græco-Roman baths and assembly halls of these cities by the lake. They hold such buildings up before us for our admiration. But we must never forget that the whole civilisation of Rome was erected, on its main economic basis, out of the crushing poverty of the poor. And Jesus was a peasant, a villager, a poor man, who 'had not where to lay his head.' He was called 'the carpenter's son.'

Jesus, in singleness of mind, sought to proclaim the love of God to rich and poor alike. He began to perform, with spiritual power, His acts of healing. He blessed, with His tender compassion, the outcast and the despised. But the rich and cultured Sadducees had no pity for the poor; and the Pharisees hated the outcast with a deep religious hate. These men thought of Christ, when they thought of Him at all, as an extravagant village preacher, who might endanger their authority, if not watched and controlled.

So Jesus shook the dust of these rich town centres from off His feet, and went back to the village people. As He turned away from the wealthy cities which had rejected Him, He thus pronounced their impending doom,—

> "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! . . . And thou Capernaum, with buildings reaching up to heaven, thou shalt be brought down to hell."

This doom, that Christ uttered, came to pass. The judgment is not upon the hollow emptiness

of the Roman civilisation alone. It is the doom of every culture and refinement of man that is built upon the oppression of the poor.

It was at this hour, we read, when the poor were all round Him, that Jesus rejoiced in spirit. He saw how the worldly-wise and scheming rich men were rejecting with scorn the message of His Father, while the simple village people received it gladly,—

"I thank thee," He cried, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me by my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

Humanity, in its childlike spirit of sonship, as manifested among these poor people, can understand God and know him. It can also understand Christ, who shares the same childlike nature. But these sophisticated and selfish rich and worldly people cannot understand God at all. They reject Christ. The deeper truths are a sealed book to them. The inner life and its joys are unknown.

Jesus then turned directly towards those whom He had called 'babes'—the toiling and labouring village people—and uttered the words of invitation, the 'comfortable words' which have touched the human heart in every age,—

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and

learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

He says to the tired labourers around Him, who were compelled to work day after day in a half-famished condition,—like their own cattle in the field,—" I cannot take away altogether this burden of daily drudgery from you, but I can relieve it. I cannot withdraw your neck altogether from the yoke of human sufferings, but I can make that yoke easy and light to bear. Come and learn from me. I am meek and lowly of heart. Seek your true joy, like me, in this inner life. Only in this way can you find rest to your souls."

Christ was not concerned primarily with changes in the outward order. The outward daily yoke had to be borne: it could never be escaped. But its character could be changed. Instead of being a heavy burden, it might become a light and easy task, joyfully fulfilled.

The message of Jesus is the same throughout the whole Gospel—the message of inward renunciation.

The goal is the same throughout the whole Gospel—the lightening of the burden of human sorrow.

The pathway is the same throughout the whole Gospel—the pathway of the inner spirit, the pathway of the transformed inner life.

We seem to have strayed far away from the atmosphere of 'labour questions,' in the modern sense of the term. Yet, in reality, this is not so. For the underlying motives of human life are always

far harder to alter and get right again than the outward acts themselves. It is the inward method which goes deepest.

Christ went directly to the motives. He dealt supremely with them. For this reason, whether we read Christ's stern denunciations of the rich, who live luxurious lives; His hatred of greed and selfishness; His indignation at the religious hypocrisy which destroyed widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers; His righteous wrath against the money-changers and hucksterers in His Father's house,—or whether we read of His tenderness towards the suffering poor; His gentle pity for the sick; His forgiving compassion for the sinner and the prostitute, the outlook is always the same. What He aims at, all the while, is the healing of the body of wounded humanity by a vast inexhaustible inflowing of divine love. His inward method is clear for all time, and none can mistake it. It is only the service of love that can finally prevail.

"Who is greater," He said, "he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? But I am among you as he that serveth."

And again:

"The Son of Man is come not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Permanent improvement in human conditions of labour is only possible where this inner spirit of pure, unselfish service is realised and understood.

Without this inner spirit, all labour movements are little else than the building up of houses on the sand of the seashore, to be washed away by each incoming tide.

St. Paul had reached the same truth in a different way when he said the words,—

> " Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth *nothing*."

When we come back to history, in order to test our religious theories by actual events in the world of men and things, it is with an intense relief that we are able to turn away from that imposing and pretentious Roman Empire, with all its superficial splendour, to the little band of Christians gathered together in Solomon's Porch in Jerusalem, who,

> " Being of one heart and of one soul, counted nought of what they possessed as their own, but had all things in common."

This was the first attempt made in the name of Jesus to express, in outward form and in concrete ways, a ' brotherhood of labour ' which sprang from the very centre of the inner life. It was purely voluntary and intuitive, a free and willing service. It differs from what is to-day called ' Communism ' in this respect, that it was an act which had its source within the soul : it was not a system imposed by man from without.

Voluntary, as indeed it was, we can see that the conditions which went to make the perfect fulfilment of the life of such a brotherhood of labour

at first possible could not be lasting in the world as it then existed. Only after a long discipline, of which we cannot even now see the end, could a strength of inner character become so widespread as to make such communal labour in its full unselfishness practical and normal and natural, except among a chosen few.

Nevertheless, the attempt, such as it was, did not altogether perish without bearing fruit. The Agape, or ' Love Meal,' continued in every Christian communion for many generations. The slave and the freeman, the Greek and the Jew, man and woman, differing in race and colour and sex, sat side by side together at a common table, where each gift of food was a gift to the one brotherhood, shared together in love. This surely was no slight victory in a divided and caste-ridden world.

In the midst of all the selfishness and worldly greed of later ages this voluntary communism of the early days became a continual scource of inspiration to earnest-minded souls, who could not be satisfied with things as they were. " It was cherished," says Professor Sidgwick, " in the traditions of the early and middle ages as the ideal form of the Christian Society."

Brotherhoods of the Common Life, both secular and monastic ; guilds for the service of the poor ; Franciscan orders of ' little brothers of the poor ' ; sisterhoods of mercy and charity and pity, each of them leading a communal life of saintliness and prayer and love for humanity in God,—these have

been founded, age after age, in ever renewed succession. They have, again and again, formed the nucleus of a nobler society. The ideal of the brotherhood of labour has not lost its power, even in our own day. It points still to the future, when a voluntary communal life may become the normal life of society over large areas as the direct outcome of co-operative endeavour.

But a wider world was opening out before the children of the new faith as this period of infancy and inexperience was left behind. The Roman Empire, with which the Christian Church now came into contact, was suffering from the effects of a great and ever deepening demoralisation. The degeneracy of the highly cultivated Greeks, who had become subjects of the Roman Empire, infected their Roman conquerors. Luxury became the curse of the Roman capital, and it spread to all the provinces. This was the disease which every one of the earlier Emperors tried in vain to cure. The evil increased with gigantic strides. Freedmen of the worst class made enormous fortunes, and by bribery and corruption undermined the foundations of the Roman State. The ruinous passion for wealth inflamed the whole patrician aristocracy of Rome. To give one example only, we read how Lollia informed Pliny that her dress had cost her £350,000. The agriculture of Italian country districts, along with that of many of the provinces, was no longer in the hands of sturdy yeomen. It had passed to rapacious capitalists who evicted the old peasantry, and were engaged in exploiting

their huge estates—their *latifundia*—by means of gangs of slaves.

This last point, just mentioned, brings us to the most wide-reaching and important of all the labour problems, which the early Church was compelled at once to face,—the fact of human slavery.

For 'labour,' in the Greek and Roman world, was mainly performed by slaves. We must understand clearly the immense significance of this fact, and mark the treatment which these slaves received. In the domestic life, among the Romans, there seems to have been only occasional cruelty towards slaves. But on the large estates in the country—the *latifundia*—and on the huge sea-galleys, which brought corn to Rome, and in the Sardinian mines, the sufferings of the slaves were appalling. It is difficult even to picture how vast that cruelty was, and how terrible the slave mortality. Desperate efforts at revolt, on the part of the slaves, were always followed by the most savage acts of repression, till fear entered into their very bones, and revolt became impossible on account of terror. In these slave wars the very worst passions of mankind were let loose. Slavery was probably the greatest of all the causes of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. It corrupted the rulers themselves, and made them in turn the slaves of their own vices and evil passions.

A very large proportion of the early Christian converts were gathered from this slave community.

For many centuries the slaves must have outnumbered the freemen in the Christian Church. Nietszche is accurate in his picture to this extent. Christianity was a 'slave religion,'—in so far as the slaves welcomed its message first and were the most numerous early disciples. This fact, however, was not its shame but its glory. Christ came to seek and to save those that were 'lost.'

St. Paul deals with the problem of the treatment of slaves in most of his epistles. We can trace his method throughout, and on the whole it remains true to the principle of Christ's own earlier teaching though something of the external and legalistic conception of duty yet remains in the midst of his new-found lofty idealism. On the one hand, St. Paul is never tired of emphasising the complete equality of brotherhood between bond and free. All such temporary distinctions as slave and freeman are obliterated within the circle of the Christian faith,—

> "In Christ," he says, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

This principle of brotherhood was not theoretical merely, but intensely practical. The tenderness of the Apostle to the runaway slave Onesimus, combined with the gentle pleading with which he requests Philemon for his freedom, is one of the most beautiful personal touches of Christian character in the Epistles. He writes to Philemon,—

" For perhaps Onesimus therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever :

" Not now as a slave, but above a slave, as a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord ?

" If, therefore, thou count me as a partner, receive him as myself."

On the other hand, while standing out for freedom, St. Paul pays heed to existing conditions. He urges the need of patience : there must be no futile upheaval of society. The slave, who cannot obtain his freedom from his non-Christian master, is told not to despair, but to rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, and to do his slave's work in future, not as a time-server, but 'as unto the Lord.' He should not, however, neglect any opportunity of purchasing or obtaining his freedom, if an occasion occurred.

We can trace here in St Paul's method something of the spirit of the Master whom Paul served. When the new inner principle of brotherhood had gone so deep, as in the case of Philemon, the outward change of Onesimus' lot, from slavery to freedom, was certain to follow. And the voluntary character of the act of emancipation would make its superlative value.

The late Duke of Argyle has well expressed this truth in the following memorable words :—

" There is no method of reform so powerful as this : If alongside any false or corrupt belief, or any vicious and cruel system, we place *one incompatible idea*,—then without any noise of controversy, or clash of battle, those beliefs and customs will wane and die. It was thus that

Christianity, without one single word of direct attack, killed off one of the greatest and most universal curses of the pagan world,—the ever-deepening curse of slavery."

It would be possible to trace down the course of history the long process of this emancipation. We could note the 'one incompatible idea' which was planted,—the idea, that is to say, of brotherhood, daily experienced in outward acts, as a reality and not an abstract dream. There was the worship side by side, as brothers and sisters, in the one common 'Supper of the Lord,' the sharing the same sacred cup and the partaking together of the one consecrated bread. At the end of the worship,—as the custom was in those early days,—master embraced slave and slave embraced master, giving and receiving the kiss of peace. Then would follow the 'Agape,' or 'Love Feast,' already mentioned above, at which all sat down together in the full realisation of brotherly love. In such an atmosphere the bondage of slavery was already more than half broken. For very shame, the Christian master felt it impossible to refuse to the Christian slave his freedom. The 'one incompatible idea' fulfilled its work.

Yet, so strong is the selfish and possessive instinct in human character, that a weary lapse and relapse of many centuries had to intervene, before what seemed so very nearly won, in the early Church, could be finally established.

We can see how the different races of the barbarians, one by one, abandoned their savage slave customs. Even as early as 662, among the

Alamanni, the slaves working on the Church estates were given, in addition to the Sunday day of rest, three whole days out of the six working days, in which to till their own plots of land. This action of the Church was copied by the nobles and men of wealth, and thus by slow degrees the final step of slave emancipation was reached among the Northern barbarian races.

It is impossible, at this point, to do more than merely refer to one terrible later relapse into a new slave trade, with far more appalling suffering even than that of the Roman mines and galleys. This was the negro slavery which devastated Western Africa from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The one point that here needs emphasis is the fact that the change in European society, which brought about the abolition of negro slavery, was first wrought within. It was in the hearts of Clarkson and Wilberforce and a host of other workers, that the 'one incompatible idea' was implanted. It was only through this inner change of heart that the outward act of slave emancipation was effected.

The slow but certain solution of this old-world labour problem, by means of an ultimate revolution in the inner hearts of mankind, should give us hope and encouragement in the face of that greatest Indian labour problem of our own age and generation—the problem of the depressed classes. The difficulties of the pariahs and namasudras, the millions of untouchables of India, can never be solved by external benefactions and charities,—by

patronising schools, by proselytising missions, or by political propaganda. The goal will be reached only by the renewed implanting, within the whole Indian community, of the 'one incompatible idea' of the brotherhood of man, which caste has tended to destroy.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF PROPERTY

THE question next in importance to that of slavery, which the Christian religion was called upon to face, was its relation to trade, property and wealth,—the problem of Capital.

Among the ancient Jews, as among other great Eastern nations, an elaborate social organisation, which was codified in religious law, made any capitalistic system of trade and industry, carried out on an extensive scale, impossible. We shall come across the question of usury in a later chapter of this book. Here, I would merely point out a vital difference between the economics of the Eastern and the Western world at the time of the early development of Christianity.

In the Roman Empire, after the fall of the Republic, the social and religious restraints upon the accumulation of capital suddenly broke down. A scope for unlimited competition and for capitalism on a large scale became practical for the first time in the West. The opportunity was seized by greedy adventurers, and the noblest families in Rome succumbed to the temptation of getting rich quickly. This undermining of the whole economic structure of society began under Julius

Caesar. Augustus saw the danger and enlisted every support of literature and statesmanship in order to bring back the simpler living of the old Roman republican days. But the vicious circle of capitalism, once entered, is not easy to escape. Its effects in degrading the poor, in oppressing the slave, in establishing vast areas of luxurious wealth and abject poverty side by side as a normal social condition, so told upon the vital energies of the State, that without any external defeat the Empire fell to pieces by the accumulations of rottenness within. The barbarians were welcomed as deliverers by an enslaved people.

In the Eastern countries, generally, the reign of this capitalist system was probably never established in the same degree as under the Roman Empire in the West. We have now collected, for instance, a considerable amount of detailed knowledge about the Empire of Asoka in India. We can trace the bare outline of its economics, and we are astonished at the business capacity by which it centralised the administration. But though centralisation reigned supreme in almost every department, the village communal land tenure went on, unimpeded and unbroken, and there are no clear signs of the full capitalist system in operation. The picture we obtain is rather that of a modified State Socialism,—a picture differing entirely from that of the later Roman Empire.

The same story may be told of China. There, individual peasant proprietors remained undis-

turbed in their possession of small holdings, while dynasties rose and fell. The whole structure of society prevented the growth of capitalism in land and made it difficult also in trade.

One of the central and distinctive marks of human history seems to be that the East has always been engrossed in religion. Religion, whether in Palestine, Persia, India, or China, has been intimately interwoven with the social and domestic life. Owing to this, the area of self-interest has been strictly and duly limited. This social condition of the East, directly due to religious causes, had its counterpart in the Middle Ages of Europe. But in the Roman Empire and in the Modern Age, another form of society has prevailed, in which the individual has been far less bound by religious and social custom. Unlimited competition and unrestricted capitalism on a large scale have been made feasible in both these periods. Self-interest and self-seeking have tended to become almost completely unrestrained, and their gains have been protected by law. These are perhaps the only two ages of despotic capitalism in the recorded history of mankind.

The crying evils of the commercial and industrial life of the Roman Empire have already been noticed. The upstart millionaires, so well known to us from the pages of Martial and Juvenal, were monsters of shameless rapacity and insensate luxury, scarcely human at all. Such men and such an atmosphere would be likely to repel with horror the minds of the early Christians, who were

living lives of self-sacrificing simplicity and poverty. We have the picture of the city of Rome itself given us under lurid imagery in the Apocalypse, where we are told,—

"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications, and upon her forehead was the name written, *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the Earth.* And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

We can understand how the early Christians pondered over such passages as these in their sacred scriptures, and read the symbol quite easily and knew that Rome was meant by the city of seven hills on which the woman was seated. We can understand also with what terrible depth of meaning the curse of Babylon was read by them in the same scripture :—

"The merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her ; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more : the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and *souls of men.*"

There can still be felt, in the profound climax of this passage, something of the repulsion which the

early Christians experienced at the soul-killing luxury of the age.

This repulsion was furthermore in a great measure heightened by the fact that in Alexandria and Corinth and Ephesus and Rome and other cities the vast wealth obtained from the *latifundia* was squandered in sexual vices that were unmentionably base and defiling. Trade and business were also mixed up with idolatry in a way that it is difficult for us to-day to realise. The scene at Ephesus, where the trade of the city is endangered by the Christians, and mob-rioting is hardly averted, shows us how very perilous was the path along which these early disciples of Jesus had to tread.

In such a world of luxury we naturally find at the outset a stern puritanism in the new religion. No doubt the pendulum swung too far, as it did also in the attempts to deal too drastically with the problems of sex, leading to a morbid contempt of marriage. It is only a foolish fancy that makes the first Christian age flawless and perfect. These early Christians were by no means immaculate people. They were extravagant and unbalanced, and even fanatical. They had the defects of their good qualities, just as the English Puritans had in the days of Cromwell and John Bunyan. In many ways they would certainly not have been pleasant and agreeable companions to live with. But for that very reason, they were able to break, for one century at least, with the corruption of the past, and to create a new tradition in human society.

With regard to the tenure of property, the scene described in the Acts of the Apostles, where the early Christian disciples brought all their goods and laid them at the Apostles' feet, was not an isolated event. It was typical of what occurred at intervals within the Church, in greater or lesser measure, throughout the succeeding centuries. At each Eucharist, or else at the Love Feast afterwards, there appears to have been what is described by one writer as a " voluntary distribution of wealth."

This distribution was made by the bishops and ministered by the deacons in proportion to the needs of each person. The poor, the aged, the disabled, the infirm, the sick, the widow, the prisoner, the orphan,—all these received their share before the rest. Every Christian who entered the community was strictly and almost sternly warned that his wealth was not his own. He was also warned at the same time in the words of the Apostle Paul,—" If a man refuseth to work, neither let him eat." The Epistle of Barnabas has a typical phrase showing the Christian teaching of the age. He writes,—

> " Thou shalt make thy neighbour partaker in all things. Thou shalt not say that anything is thine own. For if ye are sharers in that which is imperishable, how much more should ye share the wealth which perisheth ? "

On the whole, it may be said that Clement of Alexandria gives the noblest teaching of the Early Church in respect to wealth. His book on riches became a kind of classic among early Christians.

Clement lived in Alexandria, with its population of over two million people, and its wealth exceeding even that of imperial Rome. The puritanical note is still prominent in his teaching, but it is softened by his essentially Greek mind, with its love of proportion and its dislike of all exaggeration. He directs his disciples as follows :—

"Seek your God, stripped of transitory display, and possessed of that wealth which is entirely your own,—faith in God, a good confession of Christ who suffered for you, and a good conscience towards mankind.

"To condemn frugality on account of stupid wealth,—what a huge error! The Lord of the universe ate food from a common bowl; He took a bason and girded himself with a towel,—He, the lowly God. He asked for drink from a Samaritan woman, who drew water in an earthenware vessel from the well.

"Jesus made use, not luxury, his aim. To speak comprehensively,—in food, clothing, furniture, dress, we should follow such Christian discipline as is serviceable and suitable to our age and pursuits. *It becomes those who are the servants of the One True God to exhibit in furniture and dress the tokens of one beautiful life.*"

To paraphrase his argument, for the sake of brevity, he asks the question :—

"What was it really that Jesus wished the rich young man to give up? It was clearly not so much wealth itself, as the spirit of wealth. He wished him to avoid those thorns of worldliness which were springing up in him and choking the good seed. Jesus warned his disciples against *trusting* in riches, not against riches themselves. He accepted the hospitality of Matthew, the rich tax-gatherer, and of Zacchaeus. The rich, therefore, need not despair of salvation any more than the poor, if only they open their hearts to the Divine Love and do

not close them in selfishness. Love, spending itself for others is of God,—nay, *is* God Himself. The Divine Love came down to earth and willingly suffered and died When love was about to offer itself in sacrifice, it said, 'My blood is given to you.' This is our sacrament, our testament. He that loves not his brother, he that spends not his life joyfully in sacrifice, has not the heart of God."

There is one illuminating passage in the non-Christian writer Lucian. He is mocking at the Christians for being such fools. He points out how easily they can be caught, because when one Christian has been put in prison all the others flock to him to bring him food and other gifts!

We gain a picture of this early Christian community during the days of persecution strangely differing from the Empire in its conduct with regard to wealth. Continual distributions of goods and property went on in different centres. All money was loosely held. At a word it was resigned for the sake of the community. Luxury of any kind was discountenanced. Privation within the community was immediately relieved, while pauperism was in every way discouraged. The poor and the weak and the bereaved had a special claim on the common fund distributed at the Eucharist or Agape. How long this voluntary distribution continued to be commonly practised is not accurately known, but we have traces of it as late as the third century.

When, however, the Christian community ceased to be a persecuted body; when with both hands, after the death of Constantine, it seized the reins of

Empire and started on its own career as a world power, its assimilation of the methods of the State, in business, wealth and trade, was very rapid. It became worldly in its turn.

Then was seen one of the very strangest extravagances in history. Men and women in thousands retired into the deserts of Egypt and Sinai and Syria and stripped themselves even of the bare necessities of life in order to follow Jesus. There were two leading motives which influenced them,—the desire for personal chastity in an age of fearful sexual licence and indulgence, and also the desire for a life of personal poverty in an age of all-pervading luxury. The fanaticism which impelled these acts of ascetic fervour was pathetic in its misplaced zeal and devotion. For it robbed the Christian community of its noblest members, and as celibacy was strictly practised and marriage was regarded as impure, the moral energy that was stored up in one generation was lost to posterity. It was allowed to pass away in almost blank sterility.

When we turn to modern India from the study of this picture, we find ourselves faced with the beginnings of an unrestricted capitalism not unlike that of the Roman Empire under the Caesars. In the next fifty years, it is not at all impossible that the very worst results of industrial capitalism in Europe will be visible in India on a vastly extended scale. The great problem appears to be, whether we are content to stand aside and witness all the social and religious sanctions, which have hitherto

kept India out of this area of unrestricted capitalism, ruthlessly broken down; whether we are prepared to press forward the very system of wealth which has proved so fatal to Europe and has led directly to a world conflagration; or whether, on the contrary, we are ready to set our faces sternly against this capitalist ideal and to seek once more, in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Gospel, the law of life which can rescue society and prevent it from sinking into the abyss. This struggle with capitalism in its modern despotic form will have to be fought out in Asia and not only in Europe. And in Asia the population is far greater, and therefore the issues of the struggle are far more keenly critical.

One more detail may be given in concluding this slight sketch of a great subject,—the picture of Leo the Great, the one strong heroic figure standing out in the midst of the tumult of a decrepit world, and ruling nobly in a decaying age. His wise, terse words on trade and profit are these: "*Qualitas lucri aut excusat aut arguit: quia honestus quaestus aut turpis.*" This phrase may be translated,—"It is the quality of gain that either excuses or condemns: for profit is either honourable or base."

THE MEDIAEVAL WORLD

CHAPTER III

THE MONASTERIES AND GUILDS

THE vital factor, as we have seen, which the early Christians brought to the solution of the problem of "property," was the social (instead of the individual) idea of *possession*—"no man counted aught that he *possessed* as his own." There was a continuous redistribution of wealth, a constant re-apportionment according to need—what one of the early Fathers calls a "recapitulation of wealth." We have been slowly learning, in the modern world, that this teaching is eminently practical and not merely idealistic; that, divorced from this, wealth accumulates in individual hands, till it becomes a monstrosity. We are beginning to understand, since the Great War, that there are no fixed individual *rights* of property—rights, final and absolute, like "the laws of the Medes and Persians which alter not." On the other hand, there are unmistakably very definite *duties* of property, if the principle of brotherhood is to be observed. "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

Perhaps the greatest evil which the system of slavery brought into the world was this, that it degraded manual labour itself, and made it too mean and base and vulgar a thing for a freeborn man to practise. The consciousness of the dignity of labour, which Christ brought home to men, in parable and precept and living example, was long in breaking down this contempt for the work which was done with the hands and the muscles, as though it were a mean thing to labour with the body, a task fit only for slaves. The scene in the Gospel story, where Christ Himself became a "slave," and performed the servile duty of washing the disciples' feet and wiping them with the towel wherewith He was girded, was indeed before men's eyes continually. But only very slowly did its full meaning dawn upon them. "Whether is greater," He said to them, on an altogether impressive occasion, "he that sitteth at food, or he that serveth? But I am among you as a servant."

In a translation made by Count Tolstoy, these last words are translated—"I am among you as a slave." The Russian writer produces from them one of his most wonderful lessons of Service. I have been reminded lately of the story told about the Indian leader, who loved to call Count Tolstoy his teacher. Mahatma Gandhi was being praised before his face, one day, by a speaker who pointed out that, though belonging to the third or merchant caste, the Mahatma had the qualities of the two highest castes, the priestly and kingly, and then

he stopped. Mahatmaji, in reply, stated that the speaker had left out the very qualities which he himself had all his life longed most to attain to, if he was worthy—the qualities of a Sudra, the caste of labourers, the servile caste. Because the highest ambition he had ever had in life was to work and labour with his hands and to serve others as a servant.

I have often thought, also, how essentially akin to this spirit of the first age of the Christian Church is the teaching contained in the poem of Rabindranath Tagore, from *Gitanjali* :—

" Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors shut. Open thine eyes and see, thy God is not before thee!

" He is there, where the tiller is tilling the hard ground, and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle, and even like him come down on to the dusty soil.

" Deliverance ? Where is this deliverance to be found ? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation : he is bound with us all for ever.

" Come out of thy meditations, and leave aside thy flowers and incense ! What harm is there, if thy clothes become tattered and stained ? Meet him, and stand by him, in toil and sweat of thy brow."

The early Christians had to learn to " take a towel and gird " themselves, and wash the feet of the poor. They had to learn the true dignity of the Sudra's position, as a " servant." They had to learn to " come down on to the dusty soil " and

to "meet him and stand by him, in toil and sweat of their brow."

They had also to learn, as we saw in the last chapter, to "come out of their meditations." They had to give up that lonely, isolated, meditative, monastic life of the Egyptian desert, where selfishness crept into the spirit of asceticism, and the dusty world was left behind in order to save one's own individual soul. This false pathway of asceticism had to be left behind completely before the true ideal of labour could be found.

The Western Church was saved from taking the wrong path by a new monastic movement, which sprang to life, under S. Benedict, during those darkest ages of Europe—the centuries of the Barbarian invasions. In the lonely forests of England and Germany and the Tyrol, in the wild tracts of inhospitable lands, the monks of this Benedictine Order lived and laboured, spending their days equally in work and prayer. To them, in that noblest of monastic ideals, work itself was prayer, and prayer itself was work. Through centuries of plunder and rapine and bloodshed, far more terrible than anything that the patient earth had witnessed in Europe before, these monasteries were oases of peaceful labour and devotion in the midst of a howling wilderness. During these Dark Ages, the fair light of humanity seemed almost to have left the earth, and—as one old chronicler vividly described it—the people said to one another, "God is dead." In these monasteries, which were scarcely touched by the

wild tumult and destruction around, the light of learning and prayer and fruitful toil gleamed forth in unimaginable beauty. Thus, and thus alone, were kept fresh the higher ideals of mankind. The most savage forces of anarchy and passion were restrained by these living examples of quiet peaceful work and self-discipline and prayer.

Painfully and slowly in the West this greatest of all industrial struggles was won. The dignity of labour, which the Roman Empire, with its chained gangs of slave labourers, had altogether lost, was recovered once more for mankind.

The Greek Ambassador Megasthenes, coming from the court of the Seleucid Emperors of the West, noticed in India one remarkable thing. *There were no slaves.* This appears to have been one of the noblest results of the great early Buddhist religious impulse, which, the more closely we analyse it, the more closely reveals to us its own kindred likeness to the first Christian age, when religious life was young and love of humanity was strong in the West. In some future period of historical research, we shall understand what the monasteries of Nalanda and Taxila and a thousand other places did for India, in taming the aboriginal tribes around them and conquering the barbarians by love and not by massacre and hate. There, too, was an ideal of labour, in those early Buddhist days, which rescued the lower castes, for a time at least, from the contempt of the higher castes and races.

But to return to the West itself. It is a strangely stirring sight to watch the new life flowing back through all the lands of Europe, as the romance and wonder of the Middle Ages begin. Single and separate ideals, from the Gospel story, were passionately held and lived out, with a devotion, incomplete indeed, but of wonderful power.

Through all the first impulse of the monastic movement, renunciation was the one ideal of life, with regard to wealth and worldly goods. In the present century in Europe, it is hard to realise the moving power of this ideal. We can compare with it the struggle which Count Tolstoy had within the bosom of his own family, in our own times, to renounce all and become poor, and how he failed up to the very end to carry his family with him. The many-sided life of Europe seems to leave little room for such a simple solution of the labour problem. It is hard to grasp with our modern imagination a social life in which such complete and instantaneous revolutions continually occurred.

We read, to take one example, how fifteen young German nobles, while intent on a murderous raid, passed the night in the Abbey of Morimond. They are deeply impressed, before they retire to sleep, with the simple poverty of the monks. In the stillness of midnight, the solemn chant rings through the cloister and brings a sudden awe to their wild hearts. The next morning finds them upon their knees before the Abbot Walter, eager

to leave their wealth and knightly station for a life of holy poverty as monks.

These great renunciations are not at all uncommon in India, even at the present time. India still lives, deep down in the hearts of her children, in her own "Middle Ages," her Ages of romance and wonder and beauty, her "Ages of Faith." That is her supreme fascination and attraction. I have in mind, as I write, the story of Debendranath Tagore, and how the princely title of his father became changed into one that was more truly regal—Maharshi—Great Rishi. One evening, when the Maharshi was longing to abandon all he had, in his search for God, he came to two *chattim* trees in the midst of a large open and elevated plain. There, in complete solitude, he spent all the night in the ecstasy of joy and meditation, seeking and finding God, whose wealth is far above all earthly treasure. He stayed there night and day under the two trees, living his life of prayer. The name he gave to the place was Shantiniketan, the Home of Peace. After a time, the leader-chief of a band of robbers and murderers, who had been the terror of the whole country-side, came to the spot, thinking that the saint was some *sadhu*, who had concealed beneath the trees a hidden treasure of gold which he was guarding. The robber-leader crept forward, eagerly intent to kill him as he sat in prayer. But when he saw the spiritual beauty of his face and its radiance of joy, his mind in a moment was changed. The robber fell down at the Maharshi's feet and con-

fessed his guilt and became his life-long disciple. To-day, in Shantiniketan itself, the voices of young children echo beneath those same *chattim* trees, and through the mango groves which have grown up around them. Amid a life from which prayer is never absent, little children learn day by day to work with their own hands and serve in the Ashram. Something of the character of the forest hermitages of olden times still remains. India has not forgotten her past.

It is true that, in Europe, as also in India, the desire for wealth has returned again and again, even under the cloak of religion. Under the specious form of sacred property, dedicated to God, this greed for wealth brought decay to the monastic orders. But the faith in the ideal was never lost. In wonderful succession, new monastic orders rose above the ruins of the old, each more sternly severe in its renunciation than its predecessor. When at last the monastic ideal itself seemed outworn and dead, the same spirit of renunciation worked its greatest wonders. S. Francis of Assisi, with all the brightness of young life about him, hears in the solemn service of the Church the words of the Gospel—" Provide neither silver nor gold." From that moment he takes poverty to himself.

" Are you thinking of a bride ? " said a friend lightly to him, noticing his earnest gaze.

" Yes, my friend," he replied, " I am thinking of a bride, nobler, richer, and more beautiful than ever your fancy can conceive."

So after that, writes his chronicler, he looked on Poverty with kindly eyes, and chose her for his bride, " whom none had chosen heretofore, except the blessed Lord Jesus Himself." To the avaricious and wealthy court of Rome he came, where all the pomp and glory of the world had been gathered, quoting the words of Jesus, " Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." He sent out his brethren of the new Franciscan Order, without purse, or scrip, who went forth rejoicing in their poverty with an inexhaustible joy. Their spirit of self-sacrifice kindled Europe into a flame.

No one would deny to-day that the monastic and Franciscan ideal of renunciation was incomplete as it was conceived by them. The end they had in view was Christian abstinence rather than Christian use. But the spirit which lay like a glowing fire burning beneath the embers, and flashing forth here and there in deeds of extraordinary sacrifice, could not be lost to mankind. The outcast and the plague-stricken and the leper were cared for with a fresh and tender care. The words of Christ came true in living deeds of charity —" The poor have the Gospel preached unto them, the sick are healed, the lepers are cleansed, and the lame walk."

Perhaps an even more striking fruit of the revival of religion in the Middle Ages is seen in the Guilds. If we were transported back from our own times into the thirteenth century, we should feel, as we walked along the narrow streets of the

rising townships, and watched the guild craftsmen gathering in their guild hall or assembling in stately concourse within the great cathedral church, that the life of industry and manual labour had gained an immensely added dignity since the days of the Roman Empire. From the earliest recorded time the Christian Church had set her seal upon the Guilds. If Mediaeval Art has given a living expression of the devotion of the age, the Guilds have handed down its busy, active catholicity.

When, in the capitulary of Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, as early as the year 858, we read that "laymen unite together for offerings, for mutual assistance, for funerals of the dead, for alms-giving and other deeds of piety," the foundation of the Guild life of Europe, which came to its full development in the Middle Ages, is clearly seen. We are carried back in mind and spirit to the days of those early Christian disciples, who "sold their goods and possessions and parted them to all men as everyone had need, and continued daily in the temple, and did eat their food with gladness and with singleness of heart."

In the earliest statutes of Abbotsbury and Exeter, we have the leading objects of the Guild life stated as "the fulfilment of charity towards the poor, the mutual care of sick brothers in life and prayers for their souls at death." In the Cambridge statutes the same aims are mentioned, and mutual aid and protection from wrongdoing are also guaranteed.

But the ideal of Guild life was capable of much further expansion. An increased industrial activity began, when Europe awoke from the torpor of the Dark Ages. The spirit of brotherhood found a wider field. The free burghers of the growing townships united gradually into Trade Guilds, which regulated fair dealing and efficient workmanship in every trade. At first there appears to have been little class distinction. The earliest University Guilds were founded on a purely democratic basis—far in advance of the political life of the times. As however their wealth grew greater, the older guilds became exclusive and were closed to new comers. Craftsmen and merchants, rich and poor, began to be distinguished, where before there had been no distinction.

A strong endeavour was made to resist this degradation. We read how the townsmen of Berwick, in the late thirteenth century, decided to organise themselves in one common guild. "All shall be members," the proclamation runs, "having one head, one in council, one body, strong and friendly."

Federal guilds, which united distant towns together, showed the precocious genius of the mediaeval life. Edinburgh, Stirling, Roxburgh, Berwick, were combined in one Scotch Guild. On the banks of the Rhine these federal guilds took an even more administrative turn, keeping the public peace and civil discipline. They seemed likely at one time to have their issue in a series

of small republics. But men's passions and interests were constantly tending to overmaster the principles of brotherhood and just distribution of wealth, on which the earlier guilds were founded. Work began to be once more regarded as degrading in the eyes of those who had made their money and wished to keep it to themselves. The great succession of plagues which swept over Europe and culminated in the " Black Death " of 1348-49, brought about an entire dislocation of industry in country and town alike. Complaints about guild tyranny were frequent during the general corruption of Europe in the fifteenth century. Church life, too, was for a time decaying. Dr. Cunningham has shown clearly that at the Reformation the Craft Guilds had so degenerated that they not only failed to keep order, but also served to depress the workmen.

I believe it will be found that just as the history of the Christian Monasteries and Guilds is the most fruitful of all studies in pointing to the true development of European industrial history in the coming age, so the history of the Buddhist monasteries and the caste trade-guilds of India will be found of supreme value to the Indian historian who sets out to trace industrial development in India. What must be given up by all sane and sober thinkers is the theory of the " clean slate " in industrial matters. We must never try to rub out the past. A tree which has attained maturity is unfit for transplantation. The history of India cannot possibly be swept away and the

industrial experience of Europe substituted for it. Such an imitation of Europe can only lead India in an utterly false direction. As we shall see later on in these chapters, our own industrial revolution in Europe took us by surprise and dislocated our social life. We were overwhelmed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and have not yet recovered. We have had to struggle out of the fearful degradation of the Factory System, and other abominations, as best we could. Indeed, even now we are still striving to pick up some of the threads of our own past history and to weave them together.

In India, during the nineteenth century, there has come to pass a confusion scarcely less disastrous in industrial matters than that of modern Europe. India's village industries have been destroyed, and the wealth of the country drained away by economic exploitation. Just as in Europe our best thinkers are going back to the Monasteries and Guilds, in order to find the true strength and inspiration of the industrial life of "Merrie England" (as Mediaeval England is rightly named) so, I fully believe, there was once an industrial life in India which was joyous and wholesome—a life in which agriculture and spinning and weaving went hand in hand together, and the whole country was self-supporting as it shared in a common prosperity.

It is surely to *this* life of India, which drew its inspiration from the joyous religious idealism and

devotion of the past, that we must go back for guidance to-day, rather than to the modern industrial life of Europe, which Western sociologists themselves are seeking to surmount and supersede.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIN OF USURY

TWO important economic doctrines had been inherited by the Middle Ages from the Early Church. These were the doctrine of the "just price" and the doctrine of the "sin of usury." The former regulated sales and bargains; the latter made the taking of interest on loans impossible for a Christian. These two doctrines were practised with great tenacity throughout the Middle Ages. They have only broken down in modern times.

In the throes of the present class warfare between labour and capital, which has been often hardly less ruthless than actual war, it may be of great service to study these two doctrines over again very carefully and thoroughly in order to find out if they offer any solution for our present industrial and commercial internecine struggles.

In order to obtain a background for these two doctrines themselves, it may be well to refer to certain flagrant examples of modern capitalistic exploitation which I have recently been investigating. I have not finished my enquiry, and therefore it will not be fair to mention the names

of the business firms concerned. But I can guarantee that the instances which I am about to present are not at all unusual in modern industrial undertakings. I have been told that they are well within the region of present day practice in our great cities, whether in New York, or Tokio, or London, or Calcutta, or Paris.

The former of the two cases is that of a modern capitalist, who is said to have bought up all the bricks in the neighbourhood of one of the greatest cities in India, and then having obtained the monopoly, to have raised immediately the price of building material by 200 per cent.

Let us look a transaction like that squarely in the face. We know how, during the present housing crisis in Bombay and elsewhere, the one immediately necessary step to be taken is to create room for expansion in order to relieve the congested slum districts. Most vital moral issues depend upon this being done quickly, for immorality breeds in slums. Yet, in the very face of this urgent social demand, here is one individual who can hinder the whole of that necessary building expansion, and hold it up indefinitely by clever manipulation of the money market. Such a man is considered supremely lucky by his neighbours if he succeeds in effecting his object. There appears to be nothing disgraceful in it. On the contrary, his new wealth brings him a thousand fresh admirers. But, if we read the parable of Christ aright, God is saying to him, all the while—

"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Surely the Christian Gospel has something more than a passive acquiescence to offer as its message to the world, when faced with reckless moral anarchy such as this I have described.

I will take my second example from the jute trade. It has been recently reported to me that a certain firm in Calcutta started business before the war and was only moderately successful. The shares had slowly risen from 100 to 145, and the rate of interest had slowly risen also. The price paid for the jute to the cultivator had also risen side by side with the prosperity of the jute business. At the outbreak of war, the cultivator could obtain seventeen shillings per maund for his jute. So far nothing abnormal had happened. But during the war and after the war the expenses of the jute cultivator had rapidly increased, and therefore, in justice, he should have received more money in return for his labour. Indeed, in order to live at the same rate as before the war, he would need to spend at least twice as much money. He ought, therefore, to be getting something like thirty-four shillings per maund for his jute. But, as a matter of fact, the opposite of this has taken place. In the years 1914–1920 the jute shares in this company went up from 145 to 1160. The interest paid on the capital invested in the company went up from 15 per cent. before the war to 160 per cent. But the price paid to the jute cultivator went down, from seventeen shillings

before the war to seven shillings in the year 1920.

This requires to be examined more in detail, if the moral dislocation of the whole thing is to be realised in all its enormity.

The cultivator of jute is usually an illiterate and ignorant peasant. He has developed, as yet, no faculty for organisation. It is therefore as easy as possible for the money-lender, the middleman, the jute broker, the capitalist, the speculator on the stock exchange, and others, to exploit him. This ignorant and illiterate peasant cannot be made immediately clever enough to counteract the unscrupulous formation of " rings " and " corners " and " combines," which keep down the price of labour for the cultivator. The dice are all loaded against him. Even the Government unwittingly helps the predatory powers which batten themselves and grow fat upon the peasant's weakness. For Government publishes, from time to time, elaborately accurate forecasts of the jute crop, and the figures given are worked out by the jute magnates to serve their own monetary advantage when they rig the market.

Let us look a little more closely still at the inarticulate peasant himself. He has to work in the fields during the moonsoon, often standing waist deep in the water. He is saturated with malaria in these mosquito-ridden districts, and the continual dampness brings on ague, rheumatism, and fever. All round his village he has to bear the stench of rotting jute fibre, the stagnation of

pools of water, and a hundred other evils. These troubles he is obliged to endure, because he needs ready money to buy cloth for his body and oil for his lamp, and other things; and these articles must all be paid for in cash. His condition before the war was pitiable enough. But his condition during the war, and in the two years of peace which have followed the war, has become almost desperate. The cost of a loin cloth, or a woman's *sari*, has gone up to twice or even three times its former value. Money has become so scarce among these peasants of Bengal, that instances have been authentically recorded of suicide having taken place because of the misery and shame of nakedness, of poor half-starved men and women. Children have cried with hunger until the father has become a dacoit in order to steal money to get bread. Meanwhile, directors of jute companies have been congratulating their shareholders on bumper dividends, and not a hint has been given in their glowing reports about the condition of the peasantry from whom those dividends were extracted. Surely we need not hesitate for the moment to assert that Jesus of Nazareth, who uttered the words—

> "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden with toil, and I will give you rest,"

is altogether on the side of the peasants in such a cruelly unjust state of affairs. He is to be found in those peasants' malaria-stricken hovels, rather than in the homes of the wealthy. We

can almost hear Him saying, with mingled sorrow and compassion,—

" Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

It has become more and more clear to thoughtful men and women in our modern age, that the system of unlimited capitalism, under which we live, is a system of brute force in disguise ; that its effects are very frequently no less deadly upon the world's populations than the destruction wrought by war.

To take another side of affairs. I have been in almost every part of the world on journeys which have been undertaken solely in order to investigate the moral evils wrought upon the poor and defenceless by the unrestricted use of capital in foreign lands. I have seen its deadly effects. Let me quote some business figures concerning the company whose chief field of exploitation has been Fiji, and whose exploited labourers have been the village men and village women from the United Provinces and Madras. The following extract is taken from the business columns of the *Sydney Bulletin* :—

The net profits shown in this table are the figures given by the Directors of the C.S.R. Company.[1] Whether they represent the true net profits the *Bulletin* does not know —nor does anybody know, except the very few inside. In past balance-sheets, the Directors certainly did not disclose all the profits made. For instance, in 1910, they admitted that for fifteen years they had been purchasing

[1] Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

property in Fiji out of profits. The result is shown in the table. In 1916 no less than £3,250,000 was written up and bonus shares issued in a new company, called the Fiji and Maoriland Company. A Directorate which can shake 3¼ millions—equal to the entire former watered capital—out of its sleeve in this way, cannot expect its figures to be taken too seriously. Looking back over the past ten years gives an amazing record for this mammoth concern. Since 1907 no new capital has been got in; but in that year, besides the issue of 15,000 shares of £20 per share, for which only £15 was paid, £750,000 accumulated profits were capitalised. That brought the paid-up capital to £2,500,000. The paid-up capital of the parent company alone is now £3,250,000, and every penny of that three-quarter millions represents capitalised profits. Here is a short history of what has happened since 1908:—

Dividends paid	£3,681,875
Profits capitalised	750,000
Assets written up	3,250,000
Added to visible reserves . .	463,479
Total . .	£8,145,354

Such is the hard and cold business statement of the wealth of the C.S.R. Company, as given in the *Sydney Bulletin*, and an even more astounding statement of profits was given later for the years that followed the Armistice. Yet, as I saw with my own eyes, the Indian labourers, who helped to make this enormous wealth, were famished. And when I asked that their wages should be raised by merely threepence a day, the Company at first stubbornly refused and Government had to be made to intervene before it was done.

At this point, and indeed all through this book, I would wish to emphasise the fact that this exploitation of the poor on a great scale is by no means peculiarly western. It is going on all over the modern world. The rising industrialism in India, as carried on by Indian capitalists, is no whit less cruel and inhuman, in its consequences, to the masses of the population than that of European exploiters.

A short time ago, I was called upon by both parties to act as peacemaker in a labour dispute at Ahmedabad, which involved altogether the fate of some two hundred thousand poor people. The millowners, in this dispute were Indian, not European. The profits that had been made in the mills for five successive years had varied from 60 to 150 per cent. In some instances, even still greater profits had been made. Immense sums of money had also been put by to swell the reserve and depreciation funds. Yet, within less than six months of decline in trade, when a depression in the cotton market took the place of the previous boom, the majority of the millowners in Ahmedabad insisted on a reduction of the mill labourers' wages by twenty per cent., or one-fifth of their whole earnings. When I reasoned with them in regard to mercy and justice, they explained to me that 'business was business'; they could not afford to 'run their mills at a loss,' even for a short time. A deadlock followed, and in spite of all efforts to make peace negotiations finally broke down. Then, after two months of misery, border-

ing on starvation, the bulk of the labourers came back to work on a fifteen per cent. reduction of their previous wages. They were sullen and defeated. To the millowners, the time wasted meant very little actual loss. They were able to sell off their accumulated stock at slightly higher prices, and thus their pockets were hardly touched at all. To them, it meant two months' holiday and little more. But to the labourers, it meant the enfeebled health of every child, owing to a starvation diet. It meant also a reduction of wages once more below the level of subsistence.

We have to understand that, here in India itself and all over the world, the destructive powers which can be exercised under the capitalistic system, when unrestricted, are so great, that, in their cumulative effects, they have far exceeded the violence of revolutionary mobs and barbarian powers at open war with one another. The problem of the modern age is to curb these wild excesses without destroying or weakening those forces of enterprise and initiative which are vitally necessary for progress.

I have been obliged to give this modern picture more fully than I had intended at the outset, because I wish to make quite clear to my readers in what follows, that these two economic doctrines of the Mediaeval Church — the doctrine of the "just price," and the doctrine of the "sin of usury" — are not antiquated, as people have often imagined, but singularly modern in their application.

The doctrine of the "sin of usury" was taken

over directly by the early Christians from the Jewish Scriptures, and was handed on by them to Mediaeval Europe. This doctrine, which declares the immorality of taking interest on money lent, has been almost peculiarly Semitic in the history of mankind. When Islam arose in Arabia, the same doctrine became incorporated in the faith and practice of every Musalman as well as of every Jew. It has validity in Islam to-day. The doctrine itself goes back to the free life of the desert, where hospitality is regarded as a sovereign virtue in human character, and the poorest are allowed to share the food of any household they may reach at their journey's end, when the night is coming on.

Among the Jews, the refusal to take interest was legally limited to dealings with fellow members of the Jewish Brotherhood. Interest could be legally taken from the Gentiles. Indeed, the Jews were the chief money-lenders in Christendom in the Middle Ages.

But the early Christian Church, in this, as in other matters, seems to have overleapt the boundaries of race and creed. The old Jewish doctrine of the "sin of usury" was raised to the universal principle. To take interest on money lent was made sinful, not only in respect to Christians, but in respect to non-Christians also. In the language of an early Christian writer—"Money is a dead thing; it must not be allowed to have any progeny, as if it were alive."

This general theory of the Early and Mediaeval

Church could not fail to be a boon during the times when commerce and trade and business were being practised among illiterate people, and when the chief need was to protect the poor from exploitation. It prevented, over large areas of the earth's surface, that very evil arising, which has been, from time immemorial, the curse of India—the evil of perpetual indebtedness. For we have learnt in India, to our cost and shame, what hopeless serfdom arises when the debt can never be repaid because of the arrears of accumulated compound interest behind it. We shall find it hard to estimate highly enough the value of the moral effect of the Church's teaching, which made avarice one of the seven deadly sins. It must be remembered that acceptance of interest was regarded by the Mediaeval Church as one form of this sin of avarice. For that reason usury was banned, and men were excommunicated who demanded interest.

But as the new life flowed back over Europe during the Middle Ages, and new townships arose, fresh problems of commerce and industry came up before the minds of Christian thinkers for settlement. Towns, fairs, guilds, crafts, and seaborne commerce, all required a remodelling of economic laws.

Bologna, in Italy, clung tenaciously to a reenactment of the old Roman code of trade and property. This, as we have already seen, was based on the three foundations of (i) absolute private ownership, (ii) accumulated interest, and

(iii) unrestricted contract. For a long time this code still held the ground in civil matters, and its retention led to great confusion.

The Mediaeval Church, on the other hand, clung tenaciously to the teaching of the Fathers. It was felt with intensity—and every fresh monastic movement brought home the truth more clearly—that the first duty of the Christian Church was towards the poor. It was claimed that the poor, for whom Christ died, could not be safeguarded from the unrestricted exploitation of the rich and powerful, except by the complete prohibition of "usury." On many other sides, alas! the Mediaeval Church weakly and timidly gave way in favour of the rich against the poor. The Church accepted feudalism, for instance, with its basis of serfdom and villeinage. But it stood out to the bitter end on this question of taking interest. To make profit out of a fellow-man's distress was regarded as sinful and unchristian. The rise of the Franciscan orders gave great strength to the Church in her struggle against "usury." Clement V. went so far as to declare that all ancient Roman civil law concerning "usury" was null and void. People who engaged in usury were to be excommunicated and condemned as heretics.

In conjunction with this doctrine of the "sin of usury" the doctrine of "just price" was also formulated. Indeed, this second theory stands, side by side with the condemnation of "usury," as the twin pillar of economic righteousness, on

which the social structure of the Middle Ages was built up. S. Thomas Aquinas gives most clearly, among the schoolmen, the definition of this doctrine of the "just price." In effecting a sale, or a barter, he says, it is the moral duty of both buyer and seller always to strive to reach a just price according to recognised standards, and neither of the two must ask for, or receive, anything more than the just price itself. The seller is to use, on all occasions, exactly true weights and measures. He is to state openly any flaws which may be present in the article sold. The buyer is not to conceal his income, or his own standard of living, or his capacity for payment. If it be objected that this is beyond weak human nature, S. Thomas Aquinas answers that it is not beyond the power of God.

Historically, it may be stated briefly and generally that this condemnation of the "sin of usury" and this insistence upon the "just price" were recognised in the Church as definitely Christian doctrines all through the Middle Ages. They were both preached and practised. But when trade and overseas commerce developed, they failed more and more in actual practice. Men found them too difficult. The commercial value of loans and partnerships as aids to increased production began to fill men's minds. At last, in the fifteenth century, these new problems, which had to be faced and solved, roused the energy of a new body of Christian thinkers. A school of writers, named the Canonists, attempted to formulate a

complete doctrine of trade founded on the two recognised Christian principles of the "sin of usury" and the "just price." Starting from the highest moral sense of the time as to right and wrong, they drew up an elaborate body of rules with regard to trade conduct. They worked back from the moral fitness of things, when ideally considered, to what was lawful and expedient among ordinary Christians. It is interesting to find that the works of these Canonists dealing with the power and use of money, are catalogued in mediaeval libraries under the head of "Christian Dogmatics."

The most important positions adopted by the Canonists were as follows :—

(i) The accumulation of wealth, as an end in itself, is forbidden to a Christian. Wealth must be used only in order to serve and to maintain each man's God-given status in society. To amass wealth, in order to go beyond one's station, and thus to overthrow society, is a deadly sin—the sin of avarice. Cowley, the poet, in a later century, thus describes this mediaeval theory of status—

> "Thou, that art born a gentleman,
> As thou dost hold of the king,
> So doth thy tenant hold of thee,
> And is allowed a living,
> As well as thou, *in his degree.*"

Thus, the only true claim to wealth is the proper observance of the duties of one's station in society In those who are rich, this observance depend

on help and protection. In those who are poor, this observance depends on the service of willing obedience. Wealth may be lawfully amassed up to the point of those services which have to be rendered by each member, in his degree, to society. But all other accumulation of wealth is strictly forbidden.

I would note here, in a parenthesis, how near this comes, at certain points, to some of the caste regulations of ancient India. When the civilised world, both in the East and the West, has given up its belief in ruthless competition and unlimited capitalism and unrestricted private property,—beliefs which have led on and on to the creation of multi-millionaires, land-monopolists, trust-magnates, steel-kings, and other abnormalities,—then these ancient social systems will be once more carefully studied afresh in order to recover some of the fundamental laws of a progressive communal life. They failed in the past, it is true. They were incomplete and faulty, it is true. But they still have remarkable and original lessons of their own to teach us, if we do not despise them as out of date. For what we are slowly and painfully learning to-day is this, that the individualistic basis of society has failed in its turn—grievously, pitiably failed. We *have* to get back to a more communal basis somehow. This does not necessarily mean that we should all of us seek to return to the precise Canonists' rules concerning status. These are not sufficiently dynamic. But neither can we go on any further

forward with our present anti-social anarchy. What at least is clear to us all is this : We cannot give the whole world into the possession of a few capitalists and financial magnates.

(ii) The next theory of the Canonists was, that because production was due primarily to the labourer, and not to the receiver or the master, therefore, for this supreme reason, the wealth which is in the hands of the master who does not work for it, is a *debt* to be returned to the labourer in service. " God and the labourer," says one writer, in a very noble phrase, " are the true lords of everything that serves for the use of men. All others are either distributors, or beggars."

In this Canonist teaching concerning the dignity of labour, we seem almost to be reading from some latter-day Socialist pamphlet. But the Canonists derived their thought directly from the Gospel story, wherein Christ is spoken of as labouring as a carpenter, and also as saying, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

(iii) In the mediaeval teaching, as it developed, the theory of the " just price," after a certain time gradually modified the kindred doctrine of the " sin of usury." For the Canonists recognised that the loss, from a loan of money, ought to be repaid along with the money itself. It was argued, that the time itself during which the money was left in abeyance as a loan represented direct loss, which demanded a just price when the money was returned. The earliest method of receiving interest of this kind was when the merchant lent

the money and claimed a just price for its loss, which was slightly greater than the sum originally lent. This may seem to be a distinction without a difference. But the next heading to be considered will show that the distinction was real, and the two dangers of compound interest and accumulated capital were avoided by this method.

(iv) In all trade partnerships the Canonists' aim was to keep wealth strictly connected with responsibility. Partnership could only be allowed where the management was shared. To bargain for a fixed reward on capital was generally forbidden, unless some responsibility was undertaken with regard to the performance of the business. Even in the matter of loans, the sharing, as a partner, of some of the risks of the employment of the loan was insisted on. Thus, if a loan was advanced for purchase of seed for a prospective harvest, the repayment of the loan in full, along with something added, would be made to depend upon the condition of the harvest. If there was a drought or famine, the repayment of the loan itself in full could not be claimed. If, on the other hand, there was an abundant harvest, the fruits of that harvest would be shared. The just price was not mechanically fixed; it was determined by equity, when all personal circumstances had been taken into account.

These, briefly, were the main positions of the Canonists of the Mediaeval Church, by which they endeavoured to bring Christian principle to bear

upon business life. They have often been ridiculed for their crudity, and it has been seriously stated that modern business could not be carried on for a single day under their conditions. But it must be remembered that "modern business" is now on its trial. It has been summoned before the judgment bar of the world's conscience. The capitalist system has already been found guilty of bringing about—more perhaps than any other single factor—the Great War itself, and it is feared to-day that even more terrible war conditions are being re-introduced into the world by the mad rush for wealth that has followed so closely in the steps of the Treaties of Versailles and Sevres. We see the rival gluttonies both of nations and individuals for coal and iron and rubber and oil,—materials through which fabulous riches may be obtained by a few days' reckless speculation, or by some diplomatic stroke in the framing of a mandate or a treaty.

It must not be forgotten that the Canonists were working out new principles in Europe. Under the Roman Empire the slave system of labour had been normal, and the care for the poor had been hardly thought out at all except by a very few rare and noble minds like Epictetus. The occasional practical mistakes of these Canonist thinkers of the Middle Ages may readily be forgiven if the greatness of their aim is considered. For their first thought was of justice and mercy to the poor. They did not put on one side and neglect altogether the words of Christ—

"Lend, expecting nothing in return: give to him that asketh."

They did not regard such sentences uttered by Christ as the empty imaginations of a wildly impossible dreamer of dreams. They believed, rather, that, in keeping these commands as literally as possible, the poor would be protected in their weakness. The Church—so they said repeatedly—was the mother of the poor. She must never become a harsh stepmother.

A great writer on economics has recently written as follows on the text which I have just quoted :—

"Much has been said about the impracticability of Christ's teaching with regard to lending without interest, but modern investigation has shown that, on purely economic grounds, the solution of some of our most difficult problems depends upon the application of this rule of conduct. Indeed, it has yet to be proved that increased expenditure, in the interests of the poorer members of society, has been attended with any dislocation of commerce; for the poverty of the poor is not only their own destruction, but in the long-run will be the destruction of the nation."

To sum up briefly this historical outline of the economic advance made during the Middle Ages—Three great ideals, corresponding to three great movements, sprang from the heart of the Christian Church. The ideal of holy poverty and renunciation of wealth was brought home to men by the religious orders, and was seen in its greatest beauty in S. Francis of Assisi. The ideal of brotherhood became the strength and life of the

mediaeval guilds. The ideal of justice lay at the root of all the varied and earnest efforts for just price and moral trade which the Canonists taught.

Let us take a single practical test, on a large scale, under modern conditions, of the mediaeval theory of the "just price." The example which I shall choose may seem somewhat fanciful at first sight, but it is not really so; for it involves fundamental fairness in making a bargain on a very extended scale between nation and nation. The test is this. A new claim has been put forward, in our own days, by the self-governing dominions of the British Empire, that the territories inhabited by the white race shall not be economically disturbed by the influx of other races whose standard of living differs from their own. The inhabitants of these countries do not wish to be economically undersold. Consider, for instance, the typical example of Australia. I put on one side all other questions which make up the "White Australia" demand, and wish to regard this economic question by itself. I would ask those Australian Christians who demand that they shall not be economically disturbed themselves, whether they are prepared to cease from economically disturbing, by their own different standard of living, the countries of Asia? For every country of Asia, which has been made dependent upon the British Empire for its governance, has been profoundly affected, in its own standards of living, by this foreign invasion and disturbance. If the "White Australia" policy

is to hold good in Australia, is not the parallel policy of self-determination in all internal affairs to hold equally good in India ?

Australia cannot have it both ways. She cannot herself exploit India and alter the standard of Indian living on the one hand, and at the same time refuse to allow India to exploit Australia and alter the standard of living in Australia. At present Australia is treating India throughout on the principle of " Heads I win, and tails you lose." But this is entirely contrary to the theory of the " just price " between two parties who are making a bargain. It is a doctrine of force, not of Christian justice.

This one example may help to show how vital and truly progressive in their character these mediaeval Christian principles are. Again and again, I have considered the two special doctrines here discussed, when trying to find some light on a modern economic problem. Just as the " redistribution of wealth " has been a fruitful thought, so also the principles of a " just price " and the " sin of usury " have been to me full of practical meaning.

THE MODERN WORLD

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMATION

LORD ACTON used to tell us, in Cambridge, at the outset of his wonderful series of lectures on European History, that Modern Europe began with the Reformation. From the political point of view it needs no prolonged scrutiny to see how right he was; and from the side of science also, there is a remarkable leap forward, when the Middle Ages are left behind and the age of experiment begins,—the scientific age. And it is no less true of Europe, that a new chapter in the history of Labour begins with the Reformation.

It is of first-rate importance for the study of Indian labour problems in the modern age to understand exactly the spiritual conflict which underlay the great change in Europe, as the Western peoples left the Middle Ages behind and plunged along that headlong course of world exploitation which is still proceeding even to-day. I shall deal in the present chapter chiefly with religious forces. These will help us most clearly of all to find the clue to the strangely mixed problems of modern labour in the West,—its sordid aspect penetrated ever and anon with

gleams of nobility, self-sacrifice and courage for the truth and for the right.

On the one hand, we shall see a selfishness, a hardness, a cruelty, a mean and sordid lust for gold, which have hardly been paralleled in human history before. On the other hand, we shall see this very cruelty and meanness and lust, redeemed and purified and often utterly transformed by the radiant beauty of self-sacrificing love. The whole panorama is of absorbing interest to a Western thinker who desires to serve the East; because the current of these new world-forces has become so strong that it is sweeping like a flood-tide over the world. At times, even, it would almost appear as if,—whether the East wished for it or not,—the civilisation of the West, along with all its unsolved labour problems, must perforce be passively accepted, even if not actively welcomed, in all Eastern lands.

The chief point to bear in mind, when dealing with the subject of the Reformation in Europe, is this: it brought to the West, at the end of the Middle Ages, with their guilds and their crafts and their monasteries and their religious and social orders of the most varied kinds, an entirely new atmosphere of individualism,—an individualism so strong and unrestrained and at times so rampant in its licence, that it has again and again appeared to earnest men of faith and religion only to lead to war and destruction and to world unrest. Even the iron will of Cromwell could not check it. "The great end

of your meeting," he said to the Parliament which he had summoned, " is healing and settling. But nothing is in your hearts but overturn, overturn." On another occasion he stated, " Dissettlement and division, discontent and dissatisfaction, have been multiplied more in five months than in some years before."

Europe in the Middle Ages had possessed a very closely interwoven texture of social organisation. There were the various degrees in Church and State, clergy and laity, feudal baron and feudal squire, yeoman and serf, burgher and apprentice, master and servant. All was ordered and regulated both by birth and custom. It was a system so rigid in many of its aspects as to be not altogether unlike the caste system of Mediaeval India. Like the caste system, it maintained an almost absolute control over each man and woman and child.

To take one example,—Villeinage bound down the mediaeval serf to the soil by birth as surely and rigorously as caste has bound down the lower castes to certain functions from which they could never be released. Men and women, that is to say, in Mediaeval Europe were born in a certain position. They did not stand alone, and they could not altogether stand outside society unless they became hermits. They had the caste instinct very strongly pronounced, but as yet they had not developed to any great or common extent the instinct of the individual.

Thus, as I have already said, the Reformation

in Europe (with its central doctrine of justification by faith, and not through membership in a church) brought into the foreground the individual. The plea of the individual conscience to be listened to with a divine authority was its central message. Men rushed from a credulous reliance on the social organism to an extreme reliance upon the infallibility of the individual conscience. All else in the world seemed unimportant to the new religious mind in comparison with the direct relation of the individual soul to God. God and the soul were the two tremendous realities.

The new ideal of the religious life, which practically dominated men's minds for many generations, was that which is set forth, with unsurpassed imagery and simplicity of language, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The single soul fleeing from the City of Destruction struggled on its lonely pilgrimage through the Valley of Humiliation past countless obstacles and temptations till it reached the River of Death and the heavenly mansions beyond. Not even wife and child can accompany the soul on its dreadful, lonely course. They follow in their turn.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century a reaction set in all over Europe. The fires of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation had almost burnt themselves out. Wars of religion had made cruelly sordid the idealism with which the Reformation had started. Decay in morals was widespread. For a time it seemed as though

the Christian faith itself was dead. Then suddenly new life appeared which was almost like a resurrection.

Few pages in European history are more wonderful than the revival of religion under Wesley and Whitefield, which was the landmark of the eighteenth century, and in a true sense the climax of the Reformation. The submerged and shipwrecked derelicts of humanity, the outcast, the criminal, the sinner and the profligate—those who had been neglected and left to perish by their fellow-men — joyfully and triumphantly awakened into a new life, as one awakes from some terrible disease and recovers health and strength and joy in living anew.

The story, so powerful and so startling in its beauty, has often been told,—the tens of thousands gathered under the cold frosty sky to hear the new preachers of salvation : the gaunt and grimy miners standing motionless in awe, while the great tears traced white furrows down their cheeks, as they heard of the love of God and repented of their sins ; the houses of drunkards and profligates transformed and breathing only purity and peace ; the mute lips and saintly faces of the preachers as they were stoned and wounded by the mob ; the eager burning charity of the converts, spending itself in acts of kindness on their persecutors. Since the time of S. Francis of Assisi there had been nothing like this seen in Europe. We may go even back to the Apostles themselves for a time of such spiritual fervour of joy and love

and purity of heart. Like the first Christian disciples these early Methodists

> "Rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.
>
> "And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Two scenes only can be given here from the lives of the two great leaders. The first is on the hill of Walsall, where the aged Wesley stands, almost beaten to death with savage blows from the mob, his white hair streaming in the wind, his lips moving in silent prayer, while over him, stirred at last to pity and repentance, stand a prize-fighter and a butcher, keeping back the crowd. The second is the picture of Whitefield, when a fallen woman crept up to him to touch the hem of his garment, and to put a tear-stained letter into his hand, in which was written: "What shall I do to express my thanks to my good God? If you have any regard to a poor, blind, naked wretch, who is not only dust, but sin, you will not reject my request, that I, even I, may forsake all to persevere in a virtuous life."

The message of the Methodists was the message of the suffering Christ,—"Who loved me, and gave himself for me." This they brought home to men's hearts by the strength of their own spiritual conviction. The movement spread beyond Great Britain, not only through Europe but abroad throughout the world; it crossed the seas and produced an equal devotion and en-

thusiasm in America. It even travelled with the early settlers to the newly settled lands of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, each in turn.

"The Methodists themselves," says J. R. Green, the historian, "were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the Church broke the lethargy of the clergy; and the "Evangelical" movement, which found representatives like Newton and Cecil within the pale of the Church of England, made the fox-hunting parson and the absentee rector at last impossible. In Walpole's day the English clergy were the idlest and most lifeless in the world. In our own time no body of religious ministers surpasses them in piety, in philanthropic energy, or in popular regard. In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm which, rigid and pedantic as it often seemed, was still healthy in its social tone, and whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infested literature, ever since the Restoration.

"A yet nobler result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor. *It was not till the Wesleyan impulse had done its work that this philanthropic impulse began.* The Sunday-schools established by Mr. Raikes of Gloucester at the close of the eighteenth century were the beginnings of popular education. By writings

and by her own personal example Hannah More drew the sympathy of England to the poverty and crime of the agricultural labourer. A passionate impulse of human sympathy with the wronged and afflicted raised hospitals, endowed charities, built churches, . . . supported Burke in his plea for the Hindu, and Clarkson and Wilberforce in their crusade against the iniquity of the slave-trade."

In the great industrial struggle which was to follow; in the generous answer given to the efforts of such men as Lord Shaftesbury and others; in all the later burning passion for right and justice, for pity and generosity, which went to redeem the nineteenth century, there must never be forgotten the fact that England was sunk in almost selfish death till Wesley came. The poorest of the poor, the criminals and abandoned drunkards, the outcast and the despised, were raised by him from the very depths of misery and profligacy to lives of heroic sacrifice and devotion.

But while the great Reformation itself, and the subsequent Wesleyan Revival, gave to the individual characters of weak men and women that inner strength and stamina which were needed for the coming industrial conflict, and for the struggle to resist the exploitation of labour under the Factory System, yet, at the same time, it has to be acknowledged that these two religious movements were incomplete on the social side. The message of salvation that they brought was an individual message. It did not aim consciously

at the redemption of society. The leaders themselves, with all their greatness, saw life from the individual standpoint, as something which had to be saved out of the wreck of a burning world. They did not see life steadily and see it whole. They were Puritans at heart. They had lost the mediaeval Catholic tradition.

As the eighteenth century drew to its close and the nineteenth century opened, the insufficiency of this individual standpoint had to be learnt, again and again, through the most cruel tyranny and suffering, and through the confusion of a terrible world crisis, hardly less great than that through which we have recently passed since August 1914.

The narrow oligarchy that was in power during the eighteenth century, both in France and England, had to be defeated in order to usher in a democratic world. The eyes of historians are mainly turned towards the vast political conflagration of the French Revolution. But the industrial revolution in England, and the exploitation of Africa and Asia for markets abroad, represent aspects of human history still more significant, even if less melodramatic, than the political upheaval itself.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

THE publication of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" in 1776 marks the starting-point of the "New Industry" in the West. Adam Smith there relates how at that period it took three weeks to carry loads of goods from London to Edinburgh; how workmen were still bound down by statute to the village where they were born; how they lived and died in the same place and in the same trade; how long trains of pack-horses carried the country goods to the great fairs. The domestic system of work made little difference between master and man. Farmer and farm labourer, tradesman and apprentice, were almost on equal terms. It is true, a great religious revolution had taken place, which had created a new treasury of individual liberty and spiritual independence; but as yet no mechanical inventions had arrived which should overthrow hand-made and hand-worked industries, and establish a new economic world.

The new inventions came, thick and fast, in rapid succession. England was taken by surprise. Before men had leisure even to think, great steps forward, in capitalism and individualism and

factory centralisation, had been taken. Their ultimate consequences were hardly considered at the time. Their immediate effects were all-absorbing. The wild confusion which followed hard upon the breaking up of the old static order of society by the "New Industry" can only be compared to the rapid growth of towns and settlements round a newly opened gold district after the first great rush for gold has begun.

Thousands were huddled into factory towns, amid smoke and steam and whirling wheels, for the first time in their lives, their old homes and associations broken, their old ties lost. Riches, gained with ease and rapidity by the few, caused an unheard of amount of suffering to the many. The change in the relation of workmen to employers was the most ominous feature of all. Under the old domestic conditions a contemporary had written—"Master and men were so joined in sentiment, and, if I may be permitted to use the term, so *loved* one another, that they did not wish to be separated, if they could help it." A few years later, a master could write concerning the new conditions—"It is as impossible to effect a union between the high and low classes of society, as it is to mix oil and water. There can be no union, because it is the interest of the employer to get as much work as he can done for the smallest sum possible."

This was not all. In order to cheapen labour and increase profits, the workhouses and orphanages were drained of their children, and women

and little children were made to work like slaves. Traffickers in child labour sprang up to keep the factory owners supplied with paupers. Canal boats and wagons crowded with these wretched starving boys and girls, passed through the country with their loads of human misery, doomed from a tender age to the most terrible slavery. "In an atmosphere of stench, in unventilated, suffocating rooms, amid the constant whirling of a thousand wheels, little fingers and little feet were kept in ceaseless action, forced into unnatural activity by blows from the heavy hands and feet of the merciless overseer."

They slept in relays upon the same filthy mattresses, with no distinction of sex. Irons were often riveted to their ankles to prevent their escape. The pages of the Blue Books are wakened to a terrible and tragic interest by this inhuman misery. Southey, the poet, in one of his letters to Mr. May, writes, "The Slave Trade is a mercy compared to it." In the evidence given before the Parliamentary Commissions, it was shown that the number of adult male workmen was scarcely 23 per cent. The rest of the workers—77 per cent. in all—were women and children.

There is no need to go on with the story of the intolerable selfishness of this unlimited and unrestricted competition in the different countries of Europe, as the vast mechanical manipulations of capital began to appear in the wake of the new inventions. But it is necessary to show how

exploitation of the weak and helpless at home was paralleled by the exploitation of the weak and helpless abroad.

The commercial and territorial expansion of the European nations over the rest of the world began with the Spanish conquests in the newly discovered territory of America during the sixteenth century. Slavery, plunder and subjection went hand in hand. Cruelties of the most hateful kind were practised in the inflamed atmosphere of insensate lust for gold and silver. Each nation in turn which set out on its career of piracy and conquest, behaved in an equally savage manner. There is little difference to be found between the Spanish "conquistadores" in the New World, and the Dutch and the English freebooters in the old. The cruelties and massacres of the Portuguese and Spaniards are well known. What is not equally realised is that the Dutch in the East Indies, and after them the English in India, had a record which was no whit less essentially inhuman. I will quote one passage from a contemporary account given in the Dutch Encyclopædia from a Dutch chronicler as follows :—

"After these proceedings, De Vlaming visited the Spice Islands, and destroyed all the villages and large boats and all fruit-bearing trees and sago palms, so that the inhabitants were deprived of food and starved. . . . Four thousand clove trees, mostly young trees, were cut down at Manipe and other places. The natives of the islands would not listen to reason. So on the night of December 22nd, we surprised the chiefs who were gathered at one of their assemblies. It was deemed that the island of

Bona was of little use to the Company. Therefore, all the means of livelihood were destroyed, especially the clove trees, which were the only inducement to our enemies to visit these islands. Later on, the inhabitants, showing again signs of revolt, were all removed, with the result that Manipe and Bona are now barren wastes. . . . The inhabitants of Hiton, being also very capricious, they have also been commanded to destroy all fruit-bearing trees, sago palms, cocoanut trees, and other necessaries for food, which had been planted with no other purpose but to serve as food in time of revolt. And, as it is very probable that they may make another effort to throw off the yoke of the Company, which appears to them to be very onerous, De Vlaming has sent round agents to find out the situation of their clove trees, so that, in case of need, orders may be sent for their extermination."

Out of this clove monopoly, which was thus ruthlessly maintained intact by the destruction of trees on those islands "which would not listen to reason," we read, in one of the Calendar of State Papers, that Poppen and Hermanson, two adventurers, had raised their estates up to the value of a sum of money exceeding £1,000,000!

A second extract may be given from the State Papers of the British East India Company, Calcutta, as follows:—

"To the Hon. Court of Directors, London.

3rd November 1772.

"The effect of the dreadful famine which visited these Provinces in the year 1770, and raged during the whole course of that year, have been regularly made known to you by our former advices; but its influence on the revenue has been yet unnoticed and even unfelt, *except by those from whom it is collected.* For, notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the

Province, and the consequent decrease of the cultivation, the nett collections of 1771 exceeded even those of 1768, as will be seen from the following abstract of accounts :—

1768–69	.	.	. Rs. 15,254,856
1769–70	.	.	. 13,149,148
1770–71	.	.	. 14,006,038
1771–72	.	.	. 15,333,660

" It was naturally to be expected that the diminution of the revenue should have kept an equal pace with the other consequences of so great a calamity. *That it did not, was owing to its being violently kept up to its former standard.*

" (*Signed*) WARREN HASTINGS," etc.

The passages I have italicised will show the morality of the age better than any comments of my own. That the revenue could be " violently kept up " and a more crushing amount than ever exacted out of a famine-stricken population (of whom more than a third, or ten million souls, had just died of famine) shows a callousness that is only equalled by the cutting down of every fruit tree on the Dutch East Indian Islands and leaving the inhabitants to starve. To give one other statistic of a traffic perhaps even more collectively cruel in its total effect—in the British slave ships which plied for over a century between the West Coast of Africa and America it was reckoned as a highly prosperous voyage *if twenty-five per cent. of the slaves survived the journey across the sea.* The rest died of the torture of thirst or disease, or from suffocation in the hold, where they were manacled night and day for fear of an outbreak or revolt.

I have not quoted these incidents of world exploitation, or called attention to the inhumanities of the factory system, merely to draw a lurid picture, but rather to explain to what excesses the unrestrained greed for wealth and territorial aggrandisement will drive forward the more powerful races of mankind.

We saw in an earlier chapter the monstrous and awful Roman tyranny over the chained slave gangs on the *latifundia*, the huge estates of the Roman capitalists, where the accumulation of wealth, under the rigid laws of private property and usury, was unrestricted; where monopolies and "corners" in wheat and oil and metal and cloth were as common practices as they are to-day; where huge millionaire fortunes were handed down from father to son while the slums of Rome were reeking with crowds of the unemployed and submerged.

This modern age, with its worship of the gods of private enterprise and competition, with its private capital floating about in vast quantities ready to be applied to any monopoly or speculation which promises inordinate profits, has repeated to-day in the Western world the conditions of Roman society under the Empire. Although barrier after barrier has been built up against the plunder of the weak and the helpless by the rich and the strong, the same incredible cruelties, the same unthinkable selfishnesses, keep on repeating themselves in a never-ending series. For half a century the noble work of the abolition

of slavery was carried forward, with a fervour of Christian faith and charity which is like a gleam of sunlight on a dark and murky day. But as soon as ever slavery was made illegal, the indenture system, with its five years' servitude on the sugar plantations, was devised to take its place. I have seen with my own eyes in South Africa and in Fiji things happening under the indenture system of Indian labour which have recalled to me what I have read in books about the worst days of slavery itself. Even after all the exposure of the inhumanity of the indenture system, the young and generous New Zealand Government, which has had freer conditions of labour development than any other country in the world, has agreed to import shiploads of Chinese indentured coolies into the plantations of Samoa.

The Concessionaire Companies on the Congo, in this present twentieth century, have starved and decimated whole populations in no less savage and barbarous a manner than the slave-hunting European powers used to do three centuries ago. The Indian Government is still to-day enriching itself with the profits of an opium monopoly which has been proved up to the hilt to be used for the express purpose of debauching human lives. The Straits Settlements—one of the richest merchant communities in the world—has obtained nearly half its revenue (thus saving its own pockets) out of the sale of the opium poison to be used in opium dens; and Hong Kong, almost equally

rich in material wealth, has derived one-third of its revenue from the same source. Thus the tale goes on even in our own day and generation.

In previous ages, we have seen how, at one stage after another, some new saintly personality arose—a Saint Benedict, a Saint Bernard, a Saint Francis of Assisi, or a modern saint like John Wesley. Such supreme moral personalities were able to bring back the burning spirit of sacrifice into the hearts of men. But the problem to-day has grown so vast in area, that single personalities, however devoted and saintly, seem to have but little power to throw back the incoming tide of evil. The tide sweeps onward like one of the remorseless forces of Nature.

Nevertheless, again and again, and *yet again*, we must go back to the central figure of the Christian Faith. We cannot doubt that in this modern age, Christ's voice will sound as clear as in the earlier days, if only we have ears to hear. But we must get right back to Christ himself, and not merely dwell upon the distorted images which men have made and labelled with the sacred name.

"It was not," Mazzini passionately writes, "to attain the ignoble and immoral 'every one for himself' that so many great men, holy martyrs of thought, have shed, from century to century, the tears of the soul, the sweat and blood of the body. Beings of devotedness and love, they laboured and suffered for something higher than the individual—for that Humanity, which ought

to be the object of all our efforts, and to which we are all responsible. Before a generation which scorned them, they calmly uttered their prophetic thought, . . . speaking to that collective being of Humanity, which ever lives, ever learns, and in which the Divine idea is progressively realised.

"The sky was dark, the heavens void, the people strangely agitated, or motionless in stupor. While nations disappeared, others lifted their heads as if to view their fall. . . . Man was hideous to behold. Placed between two infinities, he had no consciousness of either—neither of his future, nor of his past. The fatherland was no more. The solemn voice of Brutus proclaimed the death of virtue from his tomb. Good men departed, that they might not be defiled by contact with the world. The multitude demanded bread and the sports of the circus.

"He came—the soul most full of love, the most sacredly virtuous, the most deeply inspired by God and the Future, that men had yet seen on earth—Jesus. He bent over the corpse of the dead world and whispered a word of faith. Over the clay, which had lost all of man, but the movement and the form, he uttered words until then unknown—love, sacrifice, a heavenly origin; and the dead arose. A new life circulated through the clay, which philosophy had tried in vain to reanimate. From that corpse arose the Christian world, the world of liberty and equality. From that clay arose the true man, the image of God, the precursor of Humanity."

CHAPTER VII

ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM

IN the last chapter some account was given of the predatory exploitation by the European races of the weaker aboriginal peoples in America, the East Indies and Africa. This was one of the most sinister events that followed closely on the breakdown of mediaeval civilisation and its peculiar social system. Individualism, as we have noticed, on its commercial side, leapt forward into prominence at the time of the Reformation and the beginning of the Modern Age. Furthermore, the discovery of America and also of the Cape route to the East Indies gave incentives to individual and national ambitions such as had but little scope in the more restricted commercial areas of mediaeval Europe.

In the present chapter it is necessary to sum up the after effects of this aggressive spirit of the West on the peoples abroad, and to trace its course later, when it had become allied with imperialistic aims and ends. We shall see how it was employed in that modern race for power which grew more and more intense as the centuries advanced until it ended in the great European War. This economic exploitation outside Europe

to-day is the central factor in the labour problem and it exists throughout the world.

But before this widest modern aspect of the historical survey is discussed, it may be well to have before our minds an ideal picture of human society as St. Paul has drawn it for us. He was giving instructions to a rapidly growing community in his own day,—the young Christian Church. He regarded the Church as representing the Christ,—the first fruits of Humanity. We shall not, therefore, be going beyond his ideal conception of the ' body and its members ' if we refer his parable to the Body of Humanity itself. The Apostle endeavours to show what that Body might be if all the different members fulfilled truly their natural functions. He writes as follows :—

" For as the body is one and hath many members, so also is the Christ.

" For the body is not one member, but many members.

" And if the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body—is it therefore not of the body ?

" And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body—is it therefore not of the body ?

" If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing ? If the whole body were the hearing where were the smelling ?

" But, as it is, there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

" Nay, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.

" That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should bear the same care, the one of the other.

"And when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

This passage from St. Paul's Epistles represents to us what the world situation might be like, if there were a true federation and commonwealth of all the different peoples of mankind. But when we turn from this ideal picture to the actual facts before our eyes to-day, we find that the stronger members of the body, instead of helping the weaker, are continually preying upon them.

Just as, in the Middle Ages, the stronger feudal lords, each in his own narrow sphere, kept down in serfdom and villeinage those who laboured on their estates, so on a vastly extended scale in this Modern Age, the European races have become, as it were, the feudal lords of the greater part of the rest of the world. Those who do not belong to the European race are being continually made to subserve the economic interests of Europe. They have been forced again and again into economic subjection, having been made into the hewers of wood and the drawers of water of the wealthier European races.

It is not easy for those who have not been abroad and have made no careful study of the subject, to grasp the vastness of the injustice and the greatness of the injury inflicted on mankind by this exploitation. Whole civilisations were blotted out,—as in the case of Mexico and

Peru. Populations of peaceful labourers and tillers of the soil were often so impoverished that the incentive to labour was gone. The slave trade on the West African coast,—to revert to it once more,—was the direct cause of the destruction, accompanied by infinite cruelty, of millions of human lives.

Its reflex action upon Europe and America must also be understood. Everywhere it re-barbarised the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon abroad, and the Latin races of the western peninsula of Europe were demoralised by it also. The spoliation of the East Indies by the Portuguese, Dutch and English led to the same result. The wealth that poured into Europe from these piracies was thoroughly corrupting. It gave to the European races, who shared in its spoils and its cruelties, a coarsely arrogant and patronising conception of the non-European races, which has formed the foundation of race hatred and fanatical colour prejudice.

When the true facts of the more recent economic exploitations of the weaker races are historically analysed, over large areas of the earth's surface, the results have been no less disastrous than those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centures. Even if less outwardly inhuman than the old slave trade or East Indian piracies yet in the long run the inward effects upon the aborginal populations have been equally desolating. Quite recently, in his inaugural lecture before the University of Oxford, Professor Coupland has

given this verdict. In no sense an alarmist, but a calm and judicial historian, this writer has declared his opinion that the modern period of economic imperialism in Africa has been in no way less evil than the period that preceded it. This is his picture :—

"Now and again its cruelty is naked and unashamed : and if, as a rule, it is outwardly less brutal, and wears the disguise of a peaceful and mutually advantageous trade, its effects on the body and soul of the negro are no less destructive than the Slave Trade itself. Lawless adventurers are soon 'nose down' on the scent along the path to wealth which the now-forbidden Slave Traders had formerly trodden. Instead of the chain and the whip, the white man brings the black man now, in exchange for his little store of rubber or ivory or gold, a gun and powder, with which to kill his fellows, and poisonous 'Trade Spirits' with which to madden and to rot himself. And presently, as the nineteenth century draws on, the Governments of Europe are seen feverishly competing to include as much as they can of this rich field within their own exclusive control, till at last all Central Africa is 'partitioned' among them, the largest share, as in the Slave Trade, falling to the British Empire. It is a terrible story and it is true, *as far as it goes.*"

Professor Coupland himself underlines these five last words, and I would strongly dwell on them at this point in order to emphasise, in its turn,

the other side of the picture. For although, perhaps, in this modern age, there has been no outstanding and unique personality like Wilberforce or Livingstone waging unceasing spiritual war against the powers of darkness with such moral strength as to bring some vast crying evil like slavery to an end, yet there has arisen in our own day and generation a multitude of unknown and almost unrecognised men and women who have gone out with joy on their faces to meet their death in a tropical climate from dysentery or fever, having only one single object,—to bring home to men and women in Africa Christ's message of love and peace.

Taking all things into account,—the frailty and weakness of these missionaries in Africa as well as their moral courage and strength,—there is perhaps no nobler page of martyrdom in the history of our own times than that which is inscribed with their names.

I have never forgotten one day at Oxford, when I was seated hour after hour alone with an Indian student, who was surrendering a high career at Oxford for the ideal of serving his country,—how he asked me again and again: "What is the *shakti*, the spiritual power, which makes these men and women go out in such numbers to die unknown in Central Africa?"

I could only answer that it was what they believed to be in very truth the living power of Christ within constraining them.

One day, quite recently, the Indian leaders in

Uganda took me out to a place called Iganga. On the way they asked me to stop for a short time. They then brought me to a Roman Catholic Father, who was living there as a solitary priest, helped in his service of love by some Sisters of the Poor. All of them had wonderfully bright and happy faces as they were absorbed in their work of tender devotion to the children of the aboriginals, who were still living in a state of savagery around them. The Indians, who were most of them Hindus, told me with deep emotion about the beauty of the saintly lives of these devoted people. Everywhere, in every part of Africa, such men and women are to be found,—true followers of the lowly Christ who came to serve mankind. There are also many outside the missionary ranks, in official and other circles, who are living a pure life of Christian service. There are also Europeans,—such as I have often met in Central Africa,—men and women, who would make no Christian profession, and yet were following literally Christ's one commandment of love for their fellowmen. All this has done much in our own day to counteract the terrible evil that has been wrought by unscrupulous European commerce and political intrigue. It is a true parallel to the struggle for the abolition of the Slave Trade a century ago.

The struggle still goes on. In some respects the old evils have come back with redoubled force owing to the long drawn horrors of the war in Europe, which powerfully affected Africa as

well as other lands. Even to-day the traffic in poisonous 'Trade Spirits' has not been finally stopped. Even to-day the concessionaire companies, whose mischief has been publicly exposed times without number, have powers which are exercised with ruinous effect upon the indigenous population.

Nevertheless, when Mr E. D. Morel's books concerning the hateful exploitation of Africa are read to the very end (and he is an unsparing critic of things evil) it is clear that the last note of all to be struck in each of them, in his concluding chapters, is that of hope. He feels that the general sentiment of mankind has been roused. Although ceaseless vigilance and immediate exposure of wrongdoing are still as necessary as heretofore, at the same time there have been encouraging signs of corporate and united action among the nations of the world in putting down world-abuses.

Yet, at present, it would not be wise to rely too much upon the prospect of united corporate action by the greater world Powers in order to remedy recognised evils. We must not forget that the atrocities on the Congo were committed under a sanction given to King Leopold by an earlier 'League of Nations.' We must go deeper still and turn at every step to the inwardness of Christ's own method,—the awakening of the individual conscience, the claim for personal service.

During one of the darkest years of the late

European War, I was present in Japan with the poet, Rabindranath Tagore. At first, his welcome by the Japanese people was greater than that accorded to any monarch. I saw the large open square in front of Tokio railway station so densely packed with people, awaiting his arrival, that at one time I feared he might be seriously injured by the immense pressure of the crowd. It was estimated that nearly 500,000 people were present, in the square and along the route, to receive him. But when he set his face sternly against the rampant modern imperialism, which he saw on every side, destroying the ancient beauty of Japan and working havoc in Korea, then the attitude of the people changed towards him. The cry was raised in the newspapers, that he was the prophet of a defeated nation; and if Japan followed India's example, she would also become subject to the West.

That cry of militarism prevailed; and the poet answered the challenge of material power by singing 'The Song of the Defeated' (see page 183), wherein he glories that his own dear nation had been accounted worthy to be humbled by God. He bids India lift up her head, and rejoice. His song is a 'Magnificat.'

On one occasion, while he was in Japan, Rabindranath Tagore was asked to celebrate in English verse a peculiarly blood-thirsty story about a certain mountain pass, where two brothers had fought a duel which had ended in the death of both. The Indian poet brooded over the

incident with intense pain, and at last wrote out these two lines, to be inscribed on the rock above the place where the duel had occurred :—

" They hated and killed each other,
And God in shame covered the deed with the green grass."

He came away from Japan deeply impressed with the tenderness and beauty of the land and its people, but shocked at the ruin of that spirit of serene beauty itself by the lust of imperial dominion.

While we were together, I remember very vividly one day mentioning to him the hope I cherished, that, at the end of the awful destruction wrought by the European War, my own country would be ready to deal more truly and justly and considerately with the vast regions of the earth under her direct rule and sway. The poet turned towards me and said, with a depth of meaning in his voice and eyes, that with all his heart's longing he wished it might be true. But he was afraid of one thing. The economic waste of the war had been so enormous, that the moment it was over there would be a fresh scramble for possessions in the tropics. The economic pressure on the weaker races might be even greater than before, and the weapons by which they could be subdued had now become even more deadly. Aeroplanes, dropping bombs on helpless villages, could take the place of machine guns and there could be no resistance. " There is no hope whatever," he

said to me, " except in an appeal to conscience,—and will your nation's conscience ring true, when you have all this added power in your hands and a load of debts to pay off? Will you not begin the old game of grab even more feverishly than before? "

The memory of that conversation suddenly came back to my mind three years later, when I was crossing Lake Victoria Nyanza. Only a few days before, on my travels, the old cavaran route of the slave trade had been pointed out to me. I was talking on board the steamer with a commercial traveller, who represented the Empire Development Association. He described to me the vast mineral resources in Central Africa, which were still awaiting exploitation. I thought of the poet's words. On two occasions I had visited the gold mines on the Rand, and I knew well what 'mineral resources' had meant to the native life of Africa; how whole tribes had been broken up to supply native labour. I knew also what 'exploitation' had meant in enervating tropical climates, where the weaker races can be forced to work and few are present to tell to the civilised world the story of what actually occurs. In Kenya Colony itself, near at hand, a form of forced labour, which was not far removed from slavery, had actually been attempted under the British flag and for a time with Government support. Only with the utmost moral pressure from England had it been prevented. I knew well how ceaseless must be the vigilance, if the

same forced labour were not to return in another form. Dr. Norman Leys, who was for seventeen years medical officer in East and Central Africa, has recently told the story, and it is well worth pondering over. He has written as follows :—

" By a skilfully designed series of measures we induced the natives of Kenya to work on the European estates instead of in their own homes. The chief of these measures are high direct taxation, increased till it now amounts to one third of the native's total earnings, and the fixing by the employers, with some government co-operation, of rates of wages. The rate now varies for ordinary labourers, from a half penny to a penny per hour.

" Even the native taxation, however, did not prevent the African labourers from leaving their employers and returning to their own villages. Though it had been made a criminal offence, always heavily punished, for even a single labourer to leave his work contrary to his employer's wish, it was still common for native labourers to give false names, desert work, and hide. So, during the War, an Act was passed that locked the shackles of the new slavery on all. This Registration Act registers in a central bureau the name, age, village, thumb print, etc., of every native, together with his personal and industrial history as given by all his past employers. There were over two thousand convictions under the Act during the first year of its operation. The Act has been gloriously successful, fiendishly successful ! Desertion from work is now punished, so invariably and so heavily, that it has become quite rare.

" Why, it may be asked, do the natives not resist ? Because they cannot. They cannot even protest. Their only spokesmen are the so-called native chiefs, paid by Government sums five, ten, or twenty times as much as the labourer's wage, to say and do what the Government tells them. The only movement of protest made by the natives was crushed by the massacre of twenty innocent

men and women. History, one supposes, will repeat on yet another page the hideous story of growing anger and hatred, of sudden pitifully futile rebellions, followed by even larger massacres and ever heavier chains of oppression. All this, in a country never conquered, where our only rights are those given in treaties in which we promised protection and respect for native laws and rights.

"A century ago, Parliament destroyed the old African slavery. It alone can destroy the new slavery in Kenya. To repeal the Registration Act would be easy. But it would merely prune extravagant growth from the tree, which chokes the soil and poisons the air. The whole system must be uprooted."

It is necessary thus to face reality in its hardest form,—not merely to be buoyed up by spacious promises. During the war the races of the world outside Europe were given pledges. But they have now learnt by bitter experience profoundly to distrust all such professions. This is right and wholesome as far as it goes. It is more healthy than the earlier credulity. But care must be taken at the same time lest this distrust itself may proceed so far as to become an exaggeration. For in spite of all the different acts of treachery and greed which have been committed under cover of this economic exploitation, there is in reality to-day a serious moral conscience awakening in Europe. Europe is struggling with her own soul. The better mind in her is striving to overcome the worse. Asia and Africa may help her in this struggle.

But Asia and Africa can only help Europe to a better mind by becoming strong themselves; by refusing all patronising help; by ceasing weakly

to submit to insults, while disdaining to return them. A frank scepticism with regard to all promises made by foreign and alien governments is a necessary mental attitude as things stand to-day in the world of political affairs. This should be combined, at the same time, with a patient willingness to put each fresh promise given to the test, in order to find out if it is genuine.

Yet disinterested help from Europe, when sincerely offered and on equal terms, should not be refused. There is a real danger to-day, in countries that have been under complete or partial subjection to Europe for a long time and wherein an exclusive spirit of nationalism has been awakened, that a pride of absolute aloofness should, with the swing of the pendulum backwards, take the place of the former servility. Both are incompatible with true freedom and brotherhood. The pride of aloofness may engender a spirit of segregation no less harmful to the Body of Humanity than the segregation caused by colour or caste. The words of the Buddha have continually to be remembered,—"Evil cannot be overcome by evil, but only by good."

CHAPTER VIII

BRITISH IMPERIALISM

AS this book will reach my own British fellow countrymen, it is necessary to come nearer home and to consider the question of British imperialism, as a world power, in relation to labour. Here, above all, an Englishman needs to be on his guard against the cant of self-congratulation and self-praise. For it is not difficult for us to take the flattering unction to our soul that we are philanthropists and world reformers, while in reality money is the main object we are seeking.

A new cult of the British Empire has increased this danger of auto-intoxication. The newspaper press throughout the civilised world has been employed to represent that, whatever may be happening elsewhere, within the British Empire, at least, an area has been found for the league of equal nations, where the strong members do truly support the weak, and the ideal is made practical that "where one member suffers all the members suffer with it, and where one member is honoured all the members rejoice with it."

But when we come to study hard facts and to look critically at promises and professions, then we find out that in reality there is an ever increasing

dis-harmony and *dis*-location within the British imperial system, which patchwork remedies will not heal. In reality, this dislocation has been growing more acutely painful, dividing the White Race from all the other races. For the White Race is everywhere, by its popular voice and popular action, claiming and asserting its own right to be racially segregated in every respect from the non-European Races. Such complete racial segregation is incompatible with the idea of membership in one body and the mutual sharing of a common life. Within the White Race itself, as it is spread over the world in the self-governing Dominions, there is actually existing to-day a harmony and unity. These white Dominions are one body, with many members suffering and rejoicing together. Even such European races as the Dutch in South Africa, or the French in Canada, can find their place ultimately within that one body of the White Race.

But with India the case is altogether different. There is no disinterested welcome to her within the one body as a fellow member. There is no mutual sharing in a common life. Rather, there is a profound dislike of Indians by the White Race in the Colonies, and an equally profound distrust. From all the self-governing Dominions Indians are excluded as residents and citizens. South Africa and Australia are markedly sending invitations at the present time to Englishmen, who have spent their lives in India, as desirable colonists and citizens ; but if any of these English-

men wished to take an Indian friend to reside with him, he would be refused. Even in England itself there have been signs of increasing colour prejudice against the very few Indans who go over there for study. What is, perhaps, the most glaring example of *dis*-location is in the tropical areas of Northern Australia, which are almost uninhabited and separated from the south by a desert. These tropical areas are strictly prohibited to any one who is not a European even though he may belong, by birth, to the so-called British Commonwealth. A Greek or an Italian may enter,—and efforts are made to get such emigrants from Southern Europe,—but Indians, who are called "fellow citizens of the Empire," are excluded. To speak of equal status under such conditions is absurd.

Everywhere, throughout the British Empire, the White Race is dominant. Everywhere the White Race has its own privileged position. Everywhere the members of the White Race can appeal successfully for special legal rights and sanctions. Everywhere, in spite of the Reciprocity Agreement, the White Race has still the absolute power of immigration freely accorded. Meanwhile, side by side with this special position of privilege allowed everywhere to the White Race, the policy of segregation is being relentlessly carried out against the Indian. Insults are daily heaped upon those Indians who have gone abroad and become domicilied in the Colonies. For the most part, they are treated with hatred and contempt

by the white colonial residents. This hatred and contempt shows every sign, in certain areas, of becoming a fanatical religion.

There has been, during recent years a distinct and appreciable increase of this hatred of the Indian throughout Africa and in other parts of the Empire. Things have gone from bad to worse. The arrogant and insulting treatment which the White Race has increasingly shown is felt like iron entering into the soul. It is deeply resented; and the resentment leads to fresh dislike. It is true that there was a temporary wake of kindlier sentiment during the last stages of the Great War. But from the moment that the claim to be treated decently as equal citizens of a Commonwealth of Nations was openly made by Indians, a stiffening began to be noticeable, and a determination to keep the Empire 'White' has been asserting itself ever since in wider and wider circles and ever gaining fresh ground. There has also been sedulously propagated the dread of what is called an 'Asiatic' invasion. This dread, wherever it advances, breeds fresh hate.

But, in the end, far more serious than this racial and political inequality,—though most intimately connected with it,—has been the persistent and overpowering exploitation, commercial and economic, which has had its greatest fields of expansion in India and Africa. The merchandise and manufactures of the West have been continually forced upon an unwilling or

an ignorant people, often to their great injury and loss.

When England was fostering her own industries, prohibitive tariffs were being levied against Indian calicos and muslins, until by these forceful means the sale of Indian goods in England was altogether stopped. Then, when England had obtained a virtual monopoly of the new machinery run by steam-power, her machine-made products were poured into India, without any protective tariffs being raised against them, until at last the spinning and weaving industry which had been universally practised in Indian villages was practically ruined.

In Africa the economic spoliation took another course. The gold and ivory of Western Africa were of great value in Europe, and therefore whole areas were debauched with gin and rum and gunpowder and matchlocks in exchange for these precious treasures.

The vast economic dislocation of Indian village society really began from the date when India's village industries were crippled, and even,—over vast areas of India,—actually destroyed. It has been often pointed out by historians how the village life of India before the British economic invasion was very nearly self-supporting. The spaces of the year that were unoccupied by field labour were utilised for home industries. The life was frugal, but it was healthy and lived in the open air. At that time, large towns with centralised industries, were hardly needed. India was a land

of villages with an exceptionally small town population.

The unworldly outlook upon life which India then possessed, marked her out among the peoples of the world. The deepest thoughts upon religion and philosophy and concerning the ethical life of mankind came chiefly from this frugal and industrious village population, which lived its own life close to nature and was not greatly demoralised by luxury, though it had faults and meannesses of its own. The remarkable coherence of this village life of India, its self-supporting basis, its self-governing capacities,—all this had been pointed out by the great thinkers and historians who had studied it. Like the parallel communal village life of China, it seemed to have its own place and function in the Body of Humanity. But now, under the impact of the West, both political and commercial, this ancient order in India is rapidly being demolished. To many thoughtful minds, who watch the crumbling process,—the constant erosion, the ceaseless undermining,—there seems very little hope of its survival.

Thus a fundamental problem has to be faced in India to-day, the importance of which to the world's future can hardly be over-estimated. Its solution, whether right or wrong, will affect all the surrounding countries of the East. The question may be stated as follows :—

Shall India, having been carried so far even against her will along the path of western in-

dustrialism, continue to follow that path? Shall India become one more of the 'industrialised' countries of the world? Shall the ancient village life of India, which was so self-sufficing and so productive of plain living and high thinking, be broken up and its family life exposed to new and terrible risks, in order to provide cheap labour for centralised capitalistic exploitation?

Or, on the contrary, is the true development of India (and perhaps China and Africa also) in the opposite direction,—to cling to the old village life, to revive the old village industries, to prefer the old frugal social order, with its many discomforts, to the new and modern capitalised society, wherein great material wealth and comfort are possible, at the expense of the exploited poor?

Or, lastly,—is there some third course open?

There are those to-day who have suddenly appeared in the towns and villages of India,—men and women, who are clothed, not in purple and fine linen, but in coarse homespun garments; who by no means fare sumptuously every day, but have learnt to live the most abstemious lives. These adventurers in social theory have declared, with no uncertain voice, that the whole fabric of our modern civilisation is rotten to the core; that the whole scheme of social life in the West has been founded upon the exploitation of other peoples; that so-called modern 'progress' is not truly progressive at all, but rather a pathway that leads astray and ends in moral chaos.

They state that the present condition of the

world, after the Great War, is mainly due to the insensate greed to get rich on the part of the Western powers, and that the only way to overcome the evil that has crept into the Body of Humanity is to retrace the false steps that have been taken and to proceed upon an altogether different road, going back to the past for a model and example.

Their thoughts are clothed in a strange language. They speak of '*Satyagraha*,' '*Ahimsa*,' and '*Charka*,'[1] where before men spoke of armaments of war. But the burden of their message, first and last, is a profound and settled distrust of modern civilisation. For the most part, these new workers are becoming almost fanatically 'nationalist' in their sentiments and aspirations. They have been diligently taught to regard foreign yarn and foreign cloth as religiously untouchable and unholy. They are enthusiastically seeking to make 'homespun' the only wear of the whole Indian population, thinking that thus by a single blow they will cut the Gordian knot of India's economic dependence on Great Britain.

In all that they are now determined to carry out they state clearly that no resort to arms will be countenanced or attempted. They have been schooled in the hard discipline of pain, and have been learning with some difficulty from their saintly leader, Mahatma Gandhi, to suffer, but not to strike.

[1] *Satyagraha* means passive resistance for the truth, *Ahimsa* means non-violence, *Charka* means the village spinning-wheel.

These modern ascetics have gone cheerfully to prison in great numbers for their convictions. At the time that this chapter is being written they are crowded in most of the jails of India, and many have endured great hardships. Repression has set in with ever increasing violence against them. Their leader is himself sharing with them a common imprisonment. He has been sentenced to simple imprisonment for six years.

Mahatma Gandhi, at the time of his trial, gave a terse and pointed explanation of his views concerning the exploitation of his own country by foreign rule. I omit here the picture which he presented of the political emasculation of India by Great Britain; for that would carry me, in a measure, beyond my subject, though the political and economic facts are almost inextricably intertwined. But his words concerning the economic exploitation are as follows :—

"I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connexion had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. . . . She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent, India spun and wove in her millions of cottages just the supplement that she needed for adding to her meagre agricultural resources. The cottage industry, so vital to India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes, as described by English witnesses. Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the

profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures, can explain away the evidence which the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers in India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for their crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history."

A second picture of the effects of British imperialism in India has still more recently been set before the public by Mr. K. M. Pannikar. This writer completed not long ago his studies at Oxford (where he was a Scholar of his College) and he has since served as Professor of History in the Muslim University of Aligarh. Mr. Pannikar for a long time was not a follower of Mahatma Gandhi. But, in the end, the attraction of the nationalist movement carried him along in its course, and he has sacrificed everything for it. With regard to the past history of British imperialism in India, his picture differs very little from that of Mahatma Gandhi himself. He writes, in his book called " Imperialism, in Theory and Practice," as follows :—

" There is a group of theorists which considers imperialism as the union of nationalities for a common defence of liberty. . . . Unfortunately this reading of history is wholly and profoundly untrue. Great Britain, whatever may be its policy with regard to its daughter communities, certainly does not stand for freedom and national life for the great majority of non-European people. What it stands for is a white oligarchy exploiting

coloured nations. It is, in fact, a 'British Empire Company, Limited,' which, like all other trade interests, is concerned only in giving a maximum profit to its shareholders. Take the case of South Africa. The grant of self-government to South Africa is supposed to constitute the proof positive of England's championship of liberty and freedom. But what is the fact? It is often forgotten that self-government in South Africa means merely the right to oppress and exploit and if necessary shoot down the six million coloured people—Indians and Natives."

The same author writes concerning British imperialism in India in the following manner :—

"It is no wonder that England holds India in her iron grip, in spite of whatever Indians may say or feel. But the thing to remember is, that though the ultimate basis of British rule in India is merely superior military strength, the methods by which she attempts to maintain her authority are not essentially military. Its genius is truly Machiavellian. It is by the creation of the great myth of English superiority, by the attempt at all costs to maintain the prestige which has come to be attached to the English race, by the creation of factions and parties, by a system of demoralising bribery known as titles, and lastly by the legal suppression of all liberties, that this Empire has been maintained."

Professor Pannikar refers also to the cultivation of the 'loyalty' of the Indian princes, by allowing them to exercise arbitrary powers over their subjects; to the opportunism which has characterised British rule throughout in dealing with Indian feudatory States and the Indian aristocracy; and last of all to the perpetual siding with vested interests against the poor.

This historian is prepared, on the other hand,

to recognise great and unforeseen advantages which have come to India and other countries from impact with the West. According to him, all has not been evil. There has been good, as well as bad, in the imperial process. He would never call British imperialism 'Satanic,' and modern civilisation 'a cursed thing,' as Mahatma Gandhi in his uncompromising manner has done a thousand times. The severity, therefore, of his condemnation comes with all the more startling force, because he is distinctly modern in his outlook rather than mediaeval.

In what I have here set forward for the careful consideration of my own fellow countrymen in this chapter, I have not attempted to modify, by any qualifications of my own, the harshness of the judgments expressed, but have left them in all their naked simplicity. Yet there is one thing that I should wish to emphasise. I have known intimately both these writers and can state with certainty that they have a deep and abiding affection for the British character. They have not been soured, as some have been, by witnessing acts of racial oppression while powerless to intervene. Mahatma Gandhi himself once said to me, "I believe I love Englishmen better than you do yourself," and I felt that his words were true, because he could love more critically and dispassionately. The same affection for England is present in the younger writer, Mr. K. M. Pannikar, whose love for Oxford and all that Oxford stands for is very deep indeed.

But,—and this is the disconcerting fact,—both of them, from quite different standpoints, regard the method by which Great Britain gained her world power as indissolubly mingled with the oppression of the weaker races of mankind. They both would call upon England to repent, not only in India, but in Africa and China also. It was his own eager desire to make England truly to see the mischief she had done, that caused Mahatma Gandhi to launch the Non-Co-operation movement. He wished to show England her fault, in the only effective way, namely, by refusing to take any part in it, or to commend it.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, the truest sign of repentance, in the case of British-Indian imperialism, would be for Great Britain to abandon altogether, in India, the revenue from the Drink and Drug Traffic, which is ruining the country morally. At the same time, British statesmen should be ready to join in preventing the economic exploitation of Indian villages which comes from dumping in them foreign cotton goods from Lancashire. They should do every thing possible to encourage home spinning and home weaving. If these two things were done, then he offered to co-operate.

Meanwhile, Mahatma Gandhi has called on his own countrymen equally to repent. The truest sign of a change of heart among them would be to treat the many millions of outcastes once more as brothers and sisters and no longer to oppress them. There is perhaps no point, in his whole

programme, on which he has laid greater emphasis than this. Of all the features of the movement, this, in my opinion, goes deepest of all.

It will be seen, from what I have said, that the protest in India, which is now being made against British imperialism, has a moral bearing throughout. It cannot be neglected with impunity by those who seek to find a Christian solution for the social problems of life. The movement has also found its true home among the toiling masses of the people, rather than among the intellectuals ; it is among the poor in the villages, that it has received its steadiest support and its warmest enthusiasm.

The more the subject is studied, the more it is apparent that modern capitalism is intimately bound up with imperialistic aims, wherever some races are strong and others are weak. Predatory exploitation, as I have already pointed out, is by no means a thing of the remote past, which modern civilisation has gradually abandoned, just as it abandoned the Slave Trade. On the contrary, it is still one of the most potent forces of the age in which we live. Indeed in certain respects it has gained recently even greater intensity of power, because it has been regarded as a necessary link in the industrial machinery which regulates Western society on its economic side.

For population increases rapidly wherever large capital is suddenly introduced for industrial purposes at any one local centre. At these new centres of industry and population continual rises

and depressions occur both in trade and human lives. The rate of production in manufactures is enormously increased and developed by new machinery. The population increases in very nearly the same ratio. Fresh markets abroad become necessary to keep up with the increasing rate of production and population. Vacant lands and weakly held areas are occupied by the stronger powers. The appetite for annexation grows. Expansion becomes regarded as a direct benefit to the nation. The growth of population at home is made the pretext for new conquests abroad.

We turn away from this very brief and imperfect outline of modern events in the field of labour and capital to the words and acts of Christ. We find how, among the first temptations that were put before him, the thought flashed upon his mind that he might obtain by some sudden act of spiritual power the glory of all the kingdoms of the world. But he at once rejected this vision of the future as incompatible with the kingdom of the truth.

When we watch the course which Christ's life followed, as it took its own natural bent, we find him turning more and more away from the city life to the tillers of the soil and the common folk of the country for his inspiration. His blessings are not upon the worldly wise and prudent, the prosperous and the strong, but upon those who are poor and meek, on those who mourn, on those who hunger for their daily bread,

on those who are weary and heavy laden with hard daily toil, on those who have none of the good things of this life, but are rich towards God. "Blessed," he said, "are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And again,—"Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

While Christ freely companied with the rich, and dined at their houses, He told them plainly that to *trust* in riches was fatal to the spiritual life of man. It was like a deadly narcotic. It produced the attitude of mind contained in the words, "Soul, take thine ease." To such a deadly sleep of destruction the call would suddenly come, —"This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Lately we have witnessed in the West such a night of the soul, when Europe was suddenly startled by the lightning flash and thunder of the Great War. All the massed up riches which had been taken from the East were wasted. Millions of innocent lives were lost in famine and blockade. Europe was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

The words which Jesus uttered about the spiritual impossibility of serving God and Mammon are inflexible words. Every great saint and prophet has repeated them, in almost identical language, but mankind in the aggregate seems powerless to understand. Christ said with utter plainness :—

"No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other : or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Many years ago, before the Great War had begun, I had to take a very long journey in Africa. During this tour I came across British economic imperialism in its naked form. The things I saw forced me to think out all these problems afresh. Some of my inner thoughts at this time were written down. They ran as follows :—

" The Gospel of Jesus is an austere Gospel,—austere, because it means sacrifice at every turn, sacrifice of wealth, sacrifice of ease, sacrifice of comfort, sacrifice, when the call comes, of life itself. And this life of sacrifice must be undergone, not as a cold formal virtue, but as a burning passion.

" There is no escape from this appeal of Jesus,—and the disciple seeks none. The cross must be taken up, not now and then at our own pleasure, but daily. The yoke never can be wholly removed. Only the joy of service makes the burden lighter, and the following of Jesus makes the yoke more easy to bear. ' My yoke,' he says, ' is easy and my burden is light.'

" This, then, is what it means to be a Christian : not the expression of an outward creed, but rather the living of an inner life. Men in every age have tried to bind the Christian spirit within external formulas and creeds : but it has been futile. Its living spirit has escaped them all. For its very essence is a life, a character, a devotion: and these can never be confined within such narrow bounds.

" I say this with a new emphasis. For I myself

had formerly a narrow outlook, and I have been learning at last—painfully, eagerly, wistfully learning—to look first at the life rather than the creed. And as my outlook has widened I have found Christ in strange, unlooked for places, far beyond the boundary of sect or dogma, of church or chapel, of any formal definition of man's devising or of man's exclusive pride.

"This lesson has been brought home to me quite recently with overwhelming power. For in South Africa I found Christ's presence more wonderfully near to me in all its beauty (moving me to adoring worship) among the patient, kindly gentle Hindu ladies who had just been released from prison, with Mrs. Gandhi as their leader, speaking kindly of their jailers and rejoicing in their tribulation, than in the churches of the wealthy of the land whose doors were closed to those who belonged to the continent of Asia in which Jesus Christ was born. I found Christ far more intimately present in the Indian and Kaffir locations, placed outside the cities of the Rand, than in those cities themselves built up as they had been of gold with all its fatal curse upon it.

"And the question came upon me with a sad and terrible insistence, as I travelled across many seas and past many shores, whether the modern, aggressive, wealthy nations of the West, armed to the teeth against one another and trafficking in the souls of men for gain, can be for long the dwelling-place of the meek and lowly Christ;

whether the hour may not be near, when he will say to them, as he said to Chorasin and Bethsaida of old, 'Woe unto you!' and will turn instead to the poor and downtrodden peoples of the earth and will say to them, 'Come ye blessed children of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.'

"For in his kingdom there are many that are last that shall be first, and first that shall be last."

Little did I think, when I wrote down these words, how near we were in Europe to the very brink of internecine war. Yet the war came, and the peace afterwards that was more deadly than war; and yet even to-day it would appear as if the lesson had not been learnt and Christ was still rejected in Europe. On the last Christmas Day, of the year 1921, a Bengali poet, whose heart was full of anguish at the sufferings of his own country, wrote as follows:—

"Great souled Christ, on this, the blessed day of your birth, we who are not Christians bow before you. We love and worship you, we non-Christians, for with Asia you are bound by the ties of blood.

"We, the puny people of a great country, are nailed to the cross of servitude. We look mutely up to you, hurt and wounded at every turn of our torture,—the foreign ruler over us, our crown of thorns; our own caste social system, the bed of spikes on which we lie.

"The world stands aghast at the earth-hunger of Europe. Imperialism in the arms of Mammon dances with unholy glee. The three witches—War Lust, Power

Lust, Profit Lust—revel on the barren heath of Europe, holding their orgies.

"There is no room for you there, in Europe. Come, Lord Christ, come away! Take your stand in Asia,—the Land of Buddha, Kabir, and Nanak. At the sight of you, our sorrow-laden hearts will be lightened. O Teacher of love, come down into our hearts and teach us to feel the sufferings of others, to serve the leper and the Pariah with an all-embracing love.

It may be that the movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in India to-day, on account of its very magnitude and the vastness of its range, has not been able to show the same pattern of silent and devoted suffering which I witnessed in South Africa,—though a great number of individuals have reached that level and remained patient and joyous to the end. It is true also that the record of his non-violent movement in India has not seldom in the past, at its outset, been marred by acts of violence and also by social boycott of a tyrannous kind. All this may be fully granted, and indeed has been granted by the most prominent leaders.

But who can fail to trace the spirit of the Christ in very much that is going on before our eyes,—the passion for righteousness, the compassion for the poor, the removing of untouchability, the silent suffering under provocation, the joyous spirit of fearless freedom? Who can read, for instance, the trial scene of Mahatma Gandhi without turning in thought to incidents in the life of Jesus himself, whom Mahatma Gandhi has been consciously seeking to follow. One day,

when I questioned him about his proposed course of action, he said to me,—" The great example of history, exemplifying all that I imply by ' non-co-operation with evil,' is Christ."

Christ is reported to have said,—" He that is near me, is near fire." Mahatma Gandhi, just before his imprisonment, spoke of the fire that was raging in his breast. I know full well that the fire which he referred to was the burning indignation in his heart at the sufferings of the poor,—those half-starved skeletons of men and women whom he saw with his own eyes personally as he passed up and down the villages of India. I have listened to him, very many times, as he has spoken of them, and the words of Christ, " I was an hungered," have come to my mind in such a way that I have known something more deeply of their meaning. And it was this same burning passion for the poor,—so it appears to me,—that made him ready again and again to take upon himself the sins committed by his followers. However far from the spirit of Christ the acts of many of those followers may have been, the leader himself remained pure at heart.

It is no wonder, therefore, to me that the figure of the Crucified had begun to mean far more in India to-day than it had ever meant in earlier days. Whereas the churches of the West as a whole, with certain notable exceptions, failed utterly, when the crisis of the Great War came to represent the Spirit of Jesus, it may be that

those who have never openly professed his name will now set forth his teaching. For Christ himself declared as a warning for all time, that many should come from the East and the West and the North and the South and sit down in the kingdom of his Father, but those who regarded themselves as the 'children of the kingdom' should be cast out.

Before closing this long chapter, it is necessary to make clear that many different kinds of oppression of the poor, often of the most terrible character, had gone on in Africa and the East for centuries before the arrival of the slave ships and the armed merchantmen from the West. In my journeys through Africa I have gathered a fund of knowledge and experience concerning the things that had happened during cannibal raids and tribal wars in the remote past. It would appear almost literally true that man preyed upon his fellowman unceasingly. In India also I have seen, in the submerged classes, called the 'untouchables' (which number, in all, nearly one-sixth of the whole population), such servility and fear, that these signs have clearly pointed back to a long history of evil treatment. Among these millions of outcastes, true manhood and true womanhood had been beaten down to the dust, century after century, with no remission and no remedy.

To give merely one example of what I have seen with my own eyes,—I once went near to the shelter of an 'untouchable' in Malabar (it could

not be called even a hovel, it was so wretchedly made), and as I approached, the shrinking fear was so abject and the cries of miserable fright were so piteous, that I simply dare not approach nearer, though I had come on an errand of love.

I have seen these same outcastes,—our fellowmen and women; our brothers and sisters,—leaping away to get on one side at my approach, as if they recognised that their very presence was polluting. The height of tyranny came before me when I saw the Nayadis, who scarcely dared even to approach within a furlong's distance for fear lest they should be beaten back into cowed subjection by their neighbours.

I have not been able to study facts in China on the spot, in the same way that I have been able to do in India and Africa and in the Pacific; but we have all been recently startled to find that in Hong Kong itself, the slavery of young girls and their use for immoral purposes have gone on, not only unchecked, but even recognised by law. It has been my duty to investigate the condition of Chinese indentured labour in Malaya and elsewhere, and the evidence that I have gathered has made me understand that man is ever ready to prey upon his fellowman and to sell him for gain. In Japan, I have actually witnessed, at Osaka and other places, the modern factory system at work, where women labour on and on for intolerable hours and under utterly inhuman conditions.

Therefore I am under no personal illusions.

I have no belief that other countries outside Europe are free from the predatory passions in man's nature. Europe did not bring to Africa and the East for the first time these evil ways. But in the case of Europe there has been this distinction, that, in spite of loud professions of a higher morality and of a more rational and decent standard of living, whole nations have committed brigandage and have gloried in it; whole nations have grown luxurious out of the misery of other lands; whole nations have lapsed into barbarism where foreign markets were concerned.

There is a saying of Christ,—"To whom much is given, from him much will be required." The guilt of Europe is all the greater in proportion as she has sinned against the light.

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF CHRIST

IN the concluding chapters of this study of the Christian attitude towards labour, I propose to deal directly with the central principles of Christ's teaching as they are set forth in the Gospels. Hitherto I have dealt chiefly with certain historical facts. I shall now attempt to describe, in outline, the principles on which those facts themselves appear to be based.

There are two aspects of the Christian relation to labour problems which can scarcely be separated. There is the direct relation of Christ to the individual soul,—His voice speaking in the conscience of individual men, impelling them to a life of love and sacrifice. There is also the direct relation of Christ to the social conscience of mankind,—His voice speaking in the great Body of Humanity, inspiring mankind with new social ideals.

To the individual, as we have seen, the sayings of Christ were indeed "spirit and life":—"The words that I speak unto you," Christ said, "they are spirit and they are life." This has proved to be literally true. They have quickened the dead and they have raised the fallen.

The meanest slave of the old Roman world, with

scarcely any individuality left under the Roman law, was startled into a wonder of new inborn freedom, as he was taught to repeat concerning himself the personal experience of St. Paul—"Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." He knew that in God's sight, at least, he was precious; for Christ had died for him upon the Cross. The faith and hope, the love and devotion, which such a thought inspired, made him in very truth that which St. Paul called him,—"a new creation."

From this personal and religious change sprang inevitably a strengthening of character. From this strengthening of character sprang freedom and independence in their turn.

We can trace the same effect, in varying degrees, in other religious movements which have deeply influenced mankind. When, in the early days of Islam, the slave who became a believer was embraced by the Prophet himself and made an equal in the Faith, a new spiritual force of freedom and brotherhood was generated in the midst of the Arabian desert which rapidly made itself felt from the borders of the Persian Gulf to the Pillars of Hercules. When Gautama, the Buddha, accepted with tender love the offering of the Sudra and the Chandala, a vast impulse of compassion swept over Asia, and its bounds were only reached where the waters of the Pacific Ocean stretch beyond the islands of Japan.

I have lived among the aboriginal Fijians, in the islands of the South Pacific, and have sat

down to the sacred meal with Fijian men and women whose grandparents were head-hunters and cannibals. I have witnessed among them such pure devotion to Christ, and such purity and strength of Christian character, that it has brought to my mind the joy and sacrifice of those early Christian disciples who laid down their lives joyfully for Christ's sake. Even more recently, I have travelled in Uganda and been welcomed there by Baganda Christians. It has been a delight and wonder to me to see the transformation of character in these Baganda people, whose fathers were living under a reign of terror, of brutal lust, of hate and slaughter. Some among them, now grown old, have told me of their parents, who went forward with joy in their faces, and with prayers of forgiveness on their lips, to meet death by fiery torture for Christ's sake. Such things as these are still happening in the modern world under our own eyes.

There is a recurrent likeness in these pictures, among different races of mankind, which reveals their common origin. This likeness lies in the one fundamental appeal of Christ to the individual human heart. These primitive races have, in our own age, been quickened by the same motive power which has been in evidence down all the ages. It has sprung from the personal appeal of love, and it has changed their characters, making their own lives full of sacrifice. The cumulative effect of such a motive power in the human race is incalculable.

While all that I have said can be shown to be abundantly true of the individual, the corporate life of humanity has also been directly and intimately affected. For, in spite of the extravagant individualism in Europe during the last three hundred years, Christ's own message in the Gospels is fundamentally social.

Perhaps it would be true to say, that no utterance has had more moulding power in history, shaping and fashioning society, than the word "Father," declared by Christ with living power as the one all-embracing Name whereby God might be made known to man. To watch the life of Christ lived in the Father's love among His brethren; to hear the name "Father" repeated by His lips, as if to win entrance by its very sweetness to the hearts of all God's children; to know by experience the influence of Christ's spirit, teaching our own spirits to cry "Abba, Father,"—all this has been gradually moulding mankind into one home, one family, one brotherhood. The word and the thought of God's Fatherhood were in no way new. But the spiritual power behind the word and the thought marked a new epoch in human history.

This conscious sense of the Father's love for all His children, with which Christ so richly inspired mankind, has awakened in the West that same pure-hearted compassion which had spread in wave after wave over the East during the great flood-tide of the Buddhist movement. Still further, it has become identified with love for

Christ himself, who is regarded as present in each member of the human race, however humble and despised,—" I was an hungered, and ye gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

The Christian principle here reaches its highest dynamic. It has been brought directly into the common life of mankind. Christ is intimately one with the downtrodden, the fallen, the sorrowing, the needy, the desperate. In their suffering He suffers: in their neglect, He is neglected: in their humiliation, He is wounded afresh and put to open shame. Lowell has given this vision of the Christ in memorable verses,—

> " Then Christ sought out an artizan,
> A stunted, low-browed, haggard man,
> And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
> Pushed from her faintly want and sin.
> These he set in the midst of them,
> And as they drew back their garment's hem
> For fear of defilement—' Lo, here,' said he,
> ' The images ye have made of me.' "

If, then, we ask ourselves the question,—" What is the main conception of the social order implied in Christ's teaching? "—I should myself have no hesitation in answering, " The principle that Humanity is one family of God. . . . ' One is your Father and all ye are brethren.' "

I feel that, on this side, the parable of the Prodigal Son is central in Christ's teaching. Humanity itself, in this parable, comes back

to God, after all its wanderings, with the words,—

"I will arise and go unto my Father, and will say unto Him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.'"

The answer which God gives to this cry of Humanity is immediate,—

"This, my son, was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found."

It is quite in keeping with this elemental teaching of Christ, that, at every point, He lays stress upon the family life and its sanctions. Fatherhood, in Christ's view of human life, is the final attribute of God. Therefore the family, which fatherhood connotes, is sacred.

Christ showed, by His deeds of mercy and love, how He regarded this family life. His ministry began with a rich blessing on a wedding festival. Mothers, with their little children, called forth His tenderest welcome. The inviolability of the married life is set forth in unmistakable terms to all His followers.

While Christ thus so practically upheld the sanctities of the family life, He carried, at the same time, its ideas into the wider social sphere. For the one prayer which He taught His own disciples to utter was this,—

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The smaller family of the individual home is to

be realised in the larger sphere of humanity itself. For humanity is the family of God, who is 'Our Father.'

But in this very prayer itself, which Christ thus taught, we find one further conception of the new social order, which demands most careful consideration,—the conception of the coming of the Kingdom of God. It is impossible to do more than give in outline the main points involved in this metaphor of the Kingdom. I shall try to do this very briefly.

Christ's words make it abundantly clear that the Kingdom has two aspects. The former of these two is that of silent growth. The Kingdom "cometh not with observation." This aspect of the Kingdom is in accord with the principle of the home life which I have already mentioned. Just as the family life of man is a growth, so the Kingdom is likened by Christ to the seed growing secretly,—"first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear."

There are very many sayings of Christ about the coming of the Kingdom of God which bear this character. In them there is no hint at all of violent change. The parables of this type are drawn and taken from the silent processes of nature. Let me quote one of His sayings only,—perhaps the most beautiful of all. I have cited it before, but it cannot be quoted too often. It runs as follows :—

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin:

"And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? . . .

"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Here we are in the very heart of nature, in its simple, quiet, orderly processes of growth. We are told by Christ that our human lives should be daily lived like that, in the same natural, spontaneous way.

But in addition to these normal and natural functions in God's world, there are also volcanic forces in nature. Christ tells us that, in the same manner, besides the normal process of growth, there is another aspect of the coming of the Kingdom of God, which is catastrophic. He says,—

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven."

Here, the picture of the coming of the Kingdom of God is volcanic and revolutionary, not gradual and silent. Even the quiet of the family life itself is broken up amid such convulsions. Christ said,—

"Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword.

" For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

" And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

We are told by Christ, quite plainly, that there shall be such " days of the Son of Man,"—days of crisis and judgment, of destruction and upheaval, which shall usher in, like some great storm in nature, the ultimate Kingdom of Peace and Love.

This Session of Christ in awful judgment in a world where evil abounds, and at last comes to the full, is really, if we come to think of it, the one sure and certain hope for human progress. For the process of growth inevitably involves, as nature is now constituted, an *overgrowth*,—a growth of weeds, or tares, as well as the growth of the good seed. Therefore, there must be, when the appionted time comes, the burning of the tares, as well as the storing of the good grain; and this implies an annihilation, a destruction, which must precede all renovation and reconstruction.

Such times of destruction are distinctly contemplated by Christ in the Gospels. They are His 'days' of judgment. We can see examples of such " days of the Son of Man " in human history. The destruction of Jerusalem itself, which Christ pointed to as one of the immediate signs of His coming in Judgment, was volcanic in its effect upon the Christian faith. It shook, with an earthquake shock, the primitive Christian

ideal, and freed it from the dead hand of Judaism. In the Middle Ages again, we can trace the new life which sprang up out of the Franciscan movement, sudden and startling in its development, and revolutionary and volcanic in its actions upon society, bringing democracy to the birth amid the throes of social convulsion.

Thus the picture which Christ gives us, when we analyse it without losing its inner spirit, is that of a new social order, called the Kingdom of God, which is all the while being slowly built up, like the silent, unseen processes of natural growth, and at the same time is also ushered in, from age to age, by sudden shocks of dissolution, by revolutionary changes, by volcanic upheavals.

I do not think that it is possible to separate these two strains in Christ's teaching; just as it is not possible to separate these two diverse aspects in nature herself. They run through all his utterances, like a double *motif* in some great orchestral music.

CHAPTER X

THE NATURAL GROWTH OF SOCIETY

WE saw, in the preceding chapter, that Christ's conception of the social order is primarily that of a silent growth, intimately connected with the simple, natural family life and its normal sanctions. This Christ expressed in the terms of the Fatherhood of God. But entirely apart from this natural order, we have also the conception of certain sudden and unnatural breaks in the historical progress of humanity,—called by Christ "the days of the Son of Man,"—involving revolution and crisis and upheaval. We have seen how these are similar to the wider aspects of nature herself. For we have earthquakes and volcanic outbreaks coming suddenly from time to time, side by side with the daily sunshine and the rain.

If we turn to present conditions in India, in the light of this teaching of Christ, there appears very much indeed that is altogether encouraging in the outlook. India appears to me to have been very highly developed in the past with regard to those normal processes of family life which Christ consecrated and blessed. As far as I have been able to read the facts of history, the *salt* of Indian

society, which has not lost its savour hitherto, but has remained good, and kept that society from corruption, has been the sacramental ideal of marriage, and the religious fulfilment of domestic life which this marriage sanctity has always involved.

For in India there has been a deep religious spirit which penetrated, from the very first, the domestic life and made it pure and healthy. This sacramental ideal of the family has been the great purifying thought which has saved Indian civilisation from decay, while other empires have perished. The idea of religious duty, and especially of religous domestic duty, has become a second nature in India. No Indian can ever throw off lightly his duty to his family. However distant any relative may be, this religious duty is sure to be recognised; and as a consequence the humiliations of the 'workhouse,' which those who have lived among the poor in England know so well, have been practically unknown in India.

But, in our own generation, a terrible injury has been done, owing to the pressure of the new industrial conditions; and if no steps are taken, this wrong, which has already been perpetrated, may soon become irreparable. In the neighbourhood of all the great modern Indian towns, the social and domestic fabric of the villages, which depends upon the sanctity of marriage, is rapidly being broken up. There can be no longer, I am afraid, be any doubt with regard to this fact and its serious and alarming moral consequences.

It has been my duty, in recent years, to make a very careful investigation into the new industrial life of India at the different centres, both in the great Indian cities and in the smaller rising townships, where growth of population has been rapid. I have also been called upon to investigate conditions of labour, under indenture, among those who were sent abroad from India to Fiji, Ceylon, Malaya, South Africa, and other places.

The facts and figures presented by these investigations have been so startling, as a revelation of festering moral evil, that for a long time I hardly dared to credit them or to give them full publicity. But they have now been proved up to the hilt by independent enquirers to be true, and the time has come to state them clearly.

The truth is, that the old domestic morality of the Indian agricultural life is breaking down in every direction, wherever close contact with the larger city life, and even with the smaller townships, owing to new industrial conditions, has occurred.

Let me take the facts which I myself know best of all,—those of Indian indentured labour. The actual "Government of India Regulation" for this labour was almost incredible in its callous laxity. It agreed that forty women should be sent out with every hundred men. In earlier years the percentage was thirty-three, or three men with every one woman. These men and women were suddenly swept away from their village homes under these new labour conditions. Very many thousands

were thus transported. The result, as I saw it with my own eyes in Fiji, was awful in its moral disaster. The women were compelled to give themselves to prostitution. I will give the picture in the words of Miss Garnham, who was sent by the Australian United Women's Associations, to find out whether my own report was true or false. She writes as follows :—

"I had evidence from various sources during my stay in Fiji, that life among the Indian labourers in the 'coolie lines' is unspeakably corrupt. Indians speak of the 'lines' at the mill centres as 'prostitution houses'; and many men have told me how glad they were to be away from the 'lines,' and settle in places where their wives could be protected. It was quite impossible, they said, for a woman to preserve her chastity in the 'lines.' The utter abandonment of morals is unfortunately not confined to the adult Indians. I have heard little children speak of things which showed an appalling knowledge of vice of the worst kind. . . . One may well pause to consider what sort of childhood is possible where the motherhood is so utterly depraved. . . .

"Moral interests were evidently sacrificed to money in this labour importation from India; and the fact that the prosperity of a colony depends largely on the moral and social welfare of the people seems to have been disregarded."

These facts, which I had set out in detail in two reports, and which Mr. Pearson had corroborated both in Fiji and Natal, were brought home to me with terrible pain by repeated visits to the Colonies where Indians had settled abroad.

Strangely enough, for a long time this emigration problem abroad had so absorbed my attention

that I did not realise how an emigration was going on within India itself, from the villages to the cities, with hardly less deadly effects. One day an Indian friend and social worker said to me,—" Why do you go out to Fiji ? I can show you evils just as bad under your very eyes."

At the time I thought this to be an absurd exaggeration ; but I cannot think so now, after what I have seen in recent years in our great Indian cities and in the smaller towns. Only a few weeks ago, I was engaged in investigating the conditions in Matiaburj, beyond the Kidderpore Docks, where returned emigrants from Fiji have drifted ; and those Indians whom I could trust, and who were among my personal friends in Fiji, have told me that after living down in Matiaburj, they have found the conditions there with regard to sexual immorality worse than in Fiji.

Again, I have made a series of investigations into the social conditions of the little town of Bolpur, which has been growing rapidly as a railway centre in the " rice " district of Bengal. I have found an increasing moral breakdown in those who have come in for trade purposes and left their wives behind them in the villages. The student life, which has been obliged to congregate in different quarters, called " messes," situated in the very centre of the bazaar, has also been unable to escape from the atmosphere of evil. It has been almost impossible hitherto to cope with this even in a single small town.

I will give one more instance. While I was

living in Perambur, among the mill-labourers in Madras, seeking for some means to settle a great labour strike, I made enquiry into the proportion of men to women and the moral conditions in this over-crowded quarter. I found that the proportion was even lower than the proportion in Fiji. The men out-numbered the women in a proportion of more than three to one. When I asked one man why he walked in from his own village six miles every morning and went back six miles every evening, he told me that it was not " safe " to bring his wife to Perambur ; and I fully understood what he meant by that word " safe," owing to my previous experiences of evil in Fiji.

Here, then, is one vital factor for investigation, and also for remedy. People talk glibly about the coming industrial expansion in India. Do they realise *at what a cost* that expansion is already being carried out in many of our great cities ? They tell us that by this means India will become prosperous. Have they never heard the words ringing in their ears,—

> " What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? "

I wish it to be clearly understood that this is a world-wide phenomenon. It is not confined to India only.

In order to refresh the memory of my readers about facts which I have already mentioned, let

me give again a brief statement, by a contemporary writer, of the conditions which prevailed, a century ago, during the Industrial Revolution in England itself. I shall summarise the account as follows :—

" The physical status of the families of the manufacturing classes in England was reduced to the lowest point by the rapid industrial change. The moral conditions were even worse. Children of tender age were reduced to physical wrecks. Young girls were ruined before they reached the age of thirteen or fourteen. Family life became impossible. The barracks in which the labourers lived reeked with immorality."

Here, in bare, cold, naked details, we have a picture of a sudden moral blight sweeping over England, from which she has never really recovered. The figures about venereal disease in England, which have recently been published, show the truth of this conclusion. They are disconcerting to read ; but the times have gone by when it could be regarded as advisable not to mention them in public. Disease cannot be cured by being glossed over, or by surface healing merely. The root of the disease must be discovered ; and this lies not merely in the corruption of the human heart, but also in the corruption of human conditions.

We may go to another country, East Africa, and follow out the consequences of modern exploitation there also ; we shall find that the lesson is everywhere the same, and it cannot be too deeply driven home to the Christian conscience.

"There can be no surer sign," the writer says, "of social disintegration, than for the marriage tie to become unstable among the masses of the people. In the mixture of men of different African tribes in European employment in British East Africa, the customary union of man and woman is now by the month. Their industrial life being precarious, their liabilities to their women are precarious also. They have no wives, as they have no homes. They get their wages at the end of the month; they change their masters at the end of the month—and so they marry for a month. These unions have no sanction in native African law, nor in our own. As is inevitable, children are rare, diseases are common. The system fits the life."

The system fits the life! This may be said of these modern industrial upheavals in almost every land, and India is no exception. But have Christ's own followers nothing to say to the desecration which is thus being wrought among the weaker members of the Body of Humanity? Is there no possibility of forestalling the evil that is being done?

Furthermore, in order that we ourselves, who are educated and cultured, may not patronisingly look down upon the poor, but rather remember the words of the Christian Scriptures—"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,"—I shall give one further revealing fact.

In my travels in Africa, I was told on the authority of one whose word could be implicitly

relied on (and his statement was corroborated by others) that, in a certain province, there was scarcely one among the unmarried men, coming as they did from refined English homes, who did not give way to the temptation of keeping an African concubine in his house, whom he could never possibly marry. It was the 'custom of the country.' God's image was thus being desecrated and defiled, not by poor ignorant African labourers, but by cultured men of my own race. God forbid that I should judge them too harshly! But I must, if I am a Christian, do all in my power to make impossible those inhuman conditions which act as imperative incentives to immorality and vice.

I have thought it best to take one single side of the industrial problem which I have personally studied, and work this out, rather than attempt to cover a wider field. The same questions that I have asked about the industrial conditions which break down married life, may also be asked concerning a hundred other things, such as the housing of the poor, the hours of labour, the provision for sickness and old age. The final answer to each one of these questions is contained in the words of Christ :—

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets."

CHAPTER XI

THE REVOLUTIONARY ENVIRONMENT

IT is strange to turn from those sayings of Christ, which describe the slow and hidden processes of nature, as affording analogies for the coming of God's Kingdom, to those passages which have been called 'apocalyptic.' In these, the language itself is strained, in order to give the picture of extreme desolation and confusion. The normal channels of growth appear to be stopped. Human life has reached a stage of catastrophe, such as happened at Naples, or at Lisbon, or at Krakatoa, in the shock of the great earthquakes, or in modern Europe generally during the days of the recent war. Christ thus describes such cataclysmal times :—

"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled : for such things must needs be : but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in divers places and there shall be famines and troubles : these are the beginnings of sorrows."

In the later passage the whole scene becomes more lurid still with tokens of dismay.

"For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation. But in those days,

after the tribulation, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory."

In another apocalyptic passage we have a striking contrast with the ordinary, normal family life of man, on which, as we have seen, such emphasis had been laid by Christ. He says, in a daring contradiction :—

" Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his own father, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. . . . And a man's foes shall be those of his own household."

And in a last passage which I shall quote, Christ declares that this coming of God's Kingdom shall be with the suddenness of lightning, which flashes from one end of the sky to the other, and that it shall divide the most intimate domestic relations. The reference is too long to write down in full ; I shall quote only the concluding words :—

" But as the days of Noah were, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house ; neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes. Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill. The one shall be taken and the other left."

There have been scholars and others who have wished to eliminate these eschatological passages from the pure teaching of Jesus, and to trace back their origin to Christ's own disciples and to the tumultuous environment in which the disciples lived. But these phrases are far too deeply embedded in the text of the Gospels to lend themselves to any such excision without a mutilation of the whole picture. And when we come across slight touches of rare spiritual beauty in the midst of such records of Jesus, we can tell, with a sure literary instinct, that the passages themselves are as authentic as those well-known chapters in the Sermon on the Mount concerning the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, which all recognise as coming from the lips of Christ.

I would refer especially to two sayings. The former tells us that we are not to say, 'Lo, here!' or 'Lo, there!' because God's Kingdom 'cometh not with observation.' 'The Kingdom of God,' said Christ, 'is within you.' No one but Christ, we feel, could have given that final word: it was far beyond the range of the disciples' original ideas.

The second is the well-known reference to the parable of the fig tree, which comes in the midst of the picture of ultimate desolation,—the stars falling from the sky and the powers of heaven being shaken. 'Now learn,' says Christ (with a sudden interruption of his account of the world tragedy), 'the parable of the fig tree. When

her branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is nigh, even at the doors.'

We feel instinctively, if we have a keen literary sense, that no hand but that of a Master could have added, at such a point, the perfect touch of the tender branch putting forth its leaves, just at this very point of tragic horror and world desolation. It is the stroke of a master hand upon the canvas, not the work of any pupil.

We have, therefore, patiently to resolve these contradictions in Christ's teaching,—the normal and the abnormal, the domestic and the ascetic, the constructive and the destructive. We cannot take short cuts and deal with one side only, as if that were final. It has been well said that only the supreme genius of a poet or an artist can bring unity into the contradictions which are inherent in human life. And the Christ is such a poet speaking to us in the Gospels. He boldly faces all facts in human life—the bad as well as the good. He does not ignore its awful side. He is to be known by us in the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, as well as through the still small voice.

We may turn, before leaving this great theme, to that one among the parables of Christ concerning the Kingdom of God, which appears to embody, within a single whole, the two processes of nature,—the process of silent growth and the

act of sudden destruction. This is the parable of the tares and the wheat. The teaching is remarkable. The more we study it, the more we experience how deeply it goes down into the mystery of our human existence. The good seed, Christ tells us, first springs up in the soil of human life; then, later on, it is discovered that tares have been sown also among the wheat. The question is asked, whether the tares should be rooted out at once, and the answer is,—'No,—let both grow together until the harvest.' Then when the harvest is ripe, the tares will be burnt and the good seed garnered safely into the storehouse.

'Until the harvest.'—There is, then, a moment in human history, when destruction of evil, relentless and inevitable, becomes a necessity. This implies (so it appears to me) a necessary place for Revolution. Life cannot be expected to be one continuous unbroken chain. There is a sense in which Christ's teaching is essentially catastrophic. As we have already seen, Christ's way of life is both social and anti-social, domestic and anti-domestic, at the same time. I am using the words of paradox; but those who know the Gospel teaching will easily recognise that I am merely paraphrasing the words which Christ so often employed,—such for instance as the saying: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. . . . The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.'

I have found, in the fundamental conceptions of the education of human life in ancient India, things that have strangely reminded me of this teaching of Christ. We find, for instance, the doctrine that the last stage of life should represent an abandonment of the world, in which all social and family ties should be broken,—even the Brahmin's sacred thread. We have, surely, here something of the spirit which is behind the words of Christ,—' He that loveth father or mother, or wife or child, more than me, is not worthy of me.'

Again, in that most searchingly difficult and austerely beautiful conception of the first stage of human life, called the Brahmachari Asram there is a definite denial to the young aspirant of the comforts and amenities of the home, along with a rigorous discipline of the bodily passions, before the stage of the ' householder ' is entered.

We have, once more, in ancient Indian thought the singular doctrine of a Destruction, which is not an end in itself, but purely and wholly a means to a renewal of creative and productive activity. The more we study carefully these doctrines, the more we can see, I think, their inner harmony with this aspect of Christ's teaching in the Gospels.

But it may be said by my readers,—" What has all this to do with the Labour Problem ? Is not your subject ' Christ and Labour ' ? Why then are you entering upon this long discussion of New Testament eschatology ? "

My answer would be, that I have done this because I have found by personal experience that these hard sayings of Christ contain wonderfully illuminating hints and suggestions concerning the ultimate meaning of the events which have been reverberating down the corridors of the world and exhibiting an explosive power of terrible intensity in our own day. It is in the light of Christ's eschatology that I have been thinking out, as far as facts have been available, the events in Russia, and in China, and in Western Asia. There has been also the breakdown of civilisation itself in Central Europe, with all its agony of destruction. And it will be understood with what deep anxiety I have watched the gathering storm-clouds of revolution in India itself,

Coincident with these, and at the back of all that has been happening lately among the races of mankind, there has been, since August 1914, the horror of the great War and the Armistice and peace which followed. Amid world earthquakes such as these, it has been to me a consolation and hope to read over and over again Christ's words :—

"Now from the fig tree learn her parable. When her branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near. So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, lift up your heads with joy, for your redemption draweth nigh. . . . In your fortitude ye shall win your souls. . . . Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

There was a crisis in such another time of

world upheaval, nearly a century ago, when men's hearts were failing them for fear on account of impending riot and destruction. At such a critical moment, Charles Kingsley had the courage to come forward and say,—'I am a Church of England parson, and a Chartist.'

There is need of the same courage in facing the facts of the world situation to-day and the same boldness in facing the vital change from the old to the new. Christ has described for us the character of the wise steward 'instructed unto the kingdom,' whose example is held up for imitation. The wise steward's special significance is this, that he is ready to bring out of his treasury things new, as well as things old. It is these new things whose coming differentiates the true disciples of Christ. For His disciples are those who are filled with a new energy and a new spirit, which are like the ferment of wine when it is freshly fermented. The new wine of the Kingdom, says Christ, cannot be put in the old leather bottles without bursting them to pieces. 'The kingdom of heaven,' Christ declares, 'suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' It is the adventurous and the daring souls whom He calls forth for the great spiritual emprise, not the laggard and the coward and the timid and the over-cautious.

While Christ's words reveal the beauty of that silent natural growth within the home and in society, out of which the tender virtues of the life he would have us lead spring forth like the

flowers of the field in their perfection, yet we must never for a moment forget (especially if we have comfortable and protected lives ourselves) that we must show equally the sterner virtues which are needed amid the storm and the earthquake and the lightning flash, when the powers of heaven are shaken. 'In your fortitude,' says Christ, 'ye shall win your souls. . . .' 'He that hath fortitude to the end, the same shall be saved.'

If we follow Christ truly, then every upward movement of mankind that represents the striving of the poor and the oppressed to reach a higher level of existence, which shall be human and not animal, is sanctified by Him, if only it is a moral striving. He calls to all who shrink back from the struggle itself :—

"I was an hungered and ye gave me no food; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was naked and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison and ye visited me not. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

Stung by the shame of the thought, urged on by the pity of the thought, inspired by the wonder of the thought, mankind presses on towards its goal. Those who have never known Christ and are not called by His name, these also He welcomes as His own friends, if only they serve humanity. When they ask of Him,—'Lord, when saw we *thee* hungry and thirsty and naked? when saw we *thee* sick and in prison?' He says to them,—

" Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me."

We have learnt, in our own day, that this final appeal of Christ is not satisfied with what has been called 'pauper-relief' charity. It presses us onward, with the compulsion of love, to probe deeply down to the root causes of the poverty itself; of all cruelty to humanity; of all exploitation of our fellow men; of all serfdom of the weaker races of mankind.

To-day we have found out that no stir of life is manifested in the Body of Humanity,—whether it is a feverish restlessness of the sick patient to shake off disease, or the healthy circulation which keeps the body normal,—which is not directly and immediately the concern of those who call upon Christ's name. For He has truly called Himself the Son of Man. Selfishness and greed, lust and passion, together with that love of money which, the apostle has told us, is 'a root of all evil,'—these are still the oppressors. It is against these, in every shape and form, new as well as old, that the battle has to be waged. The final victory is won when the inner heart is converted, and not before.

But the strongholds of evil themselves have to be thrown down, whether they take the form of a capitalistic system, or an autocracy of labour; whether they appear before us in a despotism such as that of the Czarist Russia, or in the bloodthirsty passion of mob rule such as held sway in the French Revolution. The national greed

which exploits other countries for its own advantage has to be overcome, as well as the individual greed which is ready to turn human beings into slaves in order to attain its end.

Furthermore,—I write as one who has learnt the lesson very slowly and imperfectly and with much wavering and hesitation,—there can be no form of patriotism for the Christian which can ever take the place of the one supreme patriotism of humanity. Love of country may have its true place, even as Christ felt the love for Jerusalem. But if a Christian is not ready to see his country perish rather than allow it to oppress mankind, he is no worthy follower of Christ. This is a hard saying, but it goes to the very heart of Christ's own teaching. In the last moments of her conscious life Edith Cavell said to the chaplain who ministered to her,—'Now I know that patriotism is not enough.' This great word of hers is true to the Christian tradition. Christ,—let me repeat it,—stands for the patriotism of humanity, not for the patriotism of a special race or sect or country.

The first age of the Christian Church had drawn to its close. The great world city of that age, which stood upon the seven hills, robed in scarlet and sitting as a queen, was at the height of its power and dominion. It had its traffic of merchandise, and gold, and horses, and slaves, and the souls of men. Mystically, its name was Babylon, but in history its name was Rome—that vast imperial civilisation around the Medi-

terranean basin. The writer of the Book of Revelation, living in the midst of the slavery and cruelty and avarice of this imperialism, sees in vision its sudden and terrible destruction. 'Babylon the Great,' he cries, 'is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.' The mighty princes and merchants, the 'kings of the earth,' stand afar off for fear of her desolation, and cry aloud,—'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour, thy judgment is come.'

And then the picture changes to the vision of One who is represented under the symbols of shame and suffering and death; One who was crucified. We read that the crucified One has gone forth conquering and to conquer; that they who follow Him count not their own lives dear unto the death; they suffer and are slain; they win through martyrdom alone.

The great modern world city of commercial greed and racial exploitation is standing forth upon the seven hills to-day, clothed in scarlet and robed as a queen. There is no single centre of power, such as Rome clearly was in the early age of the Church. Mystically, the name of this new world city is still Babylon,—Babylon the Great. But in modern history its name is London and Paris and Berlin, Calcutta and Tokyo, New York and Buenos Ayres, Johannesburg and San Francisco, with many other names besides. For the world empire of man is no longer confined

to the boundaries of the tiny Mediterranean Sea. It has become coterminous with the human race itself in its greed and rapacity, in its gigantic and crushing material organisation, in its traffic for the souls of men. The vast oceans are under its sway as well as the continents.

Christ, who is crowned with many diadems of suffering and martyrdom, goes forth conquering and to conquer. He calls upon those who are His followers to take up the Cross. He invites us to the very same service of the Cross; He invites us to the very same service of Humanity, for which He gave His life in sacrifice. He asks us to join the long succession of the children of faith who, in every age, have endured as seeing God who is invisible; who went forth as pilgrims seeking the City which hath 'foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.'

APPENDIX I

RELIGION AND POLITICS

AS the relation of politics to religion is one of the most difficult which confronts the modern age, I have ventured to reprint in this Appendix a study which I made of the subject some time ago, when I was working along with a devoted group of Bengali students, who were all ardent members of Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Co-operation Movement. We were engaged in famine relief work in the distressed area of North Bengal, which had been visited by a terrible flood extending over 1200 square miles of country. The rice crop had been entirely destroyed, and the poor people of the district, numbering many hundreds of thousands, were on the verge of starvation. The Non-Co-operation Movement, in which all my fellow-workers were engaged, compelled me to think seriously over the meaning of Christ's words about rendering 'tribute to Caesar.' I trust that what I have written may also throw some further light in England on the Non-Co-operation Movement itself, which has, in my opinion, been sadly misunderstood. I wrote as follows :—

We are told in the Gospel narrative that the Jewish leaders drew near to Christ, tempting Him, and trying to entrap Him. They said to Him : "Master, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" Christ's answer was a simple one, which turned their question back upon themselves. He called for a coin which was current in the

bazaar,—a Roman denarius. He asked them whose name and head were stamped upon it. They said at once: "Caesar's." Christ answered: "Then give to Caesar, what is due to Caesar: but give to God, what is due to God."

With regard to Caesar, Christ points to the experience of everyday life in the world. If we take something from others, we must render back something again. If we take the coinage of the world, we must pay back to the world in the same coin. The Jews were taking certain advantages from Caesar's government: they could not expect to do this for nothing. They would have to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.'

But to Christ, these 'things that are Caesar's' were matters of minor importance. There were far weightier matters to be considered, namely, the things of God. Therefore He turns away almost impatiently from this question, which they had asked about the tribute money, and adds His final words: "But render unto God the things that are God's."

On another occasion, Christ spoke in a somewhat similar manner, and His words throw light on this passage. He found the Scribes and Pharisees almost wholly occupied with those external things of the Jewish Law, which He calls, 'the tithing of mint and anise and cummin.' All the while, they were neglecting the weightier matters of the Law,—truth and righteousness and mercy. Therefore He sternly rebuked them and called them, 'blind leaders of the blind.' He said that they were like men, who 'strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel.'

So with these other Jewish leaders, Christ found them wholly taken up with mundane affairs which He calls, in a single phrase, 'the things of Caesar,' in contrast with 'the things of God.' He warns them, that they should get

their minds clear and come into the higher atmosphere of the divine life.

Here, as elsewhere, Christ lays all the stress upon the inner spirit of man, as the final concern in human life, in comparison with which all other things are of secondary importance. In another passage He utters the words: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" With Christ, in the first and last resort, it is the 'things that are of God' which truly matter. In His parables concerning the Kingdom of God, He speaks of a treasure hid in a field, for which a man will sell all that he has, if only he can obtain it. He tells of a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who finds at last a pearl of great price, and gives all that he has in order to buy it. All these are parables, which show the priceless value of the soul. In another series of Christ's sayings, we are told that father, mother, wife and child, must not come before the sovereign call of the Kingdom of God. There are times when even those who are nearest and dearest must be given up, if the Kingdom of God is to be attained.

It is true that Christ, at the same time, taught His disciples to pray, that God's Kingdom might come and God's will might be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. But this coming of God's Kingdom on earth was very different indeed from the ushering in of a comfortable modern Utopia, such as is often conceived by western minds to-day. Its joy and peace were to be won through sorrow and loss and death. "My Kingdom," said Christ to Pilate, "is not of this world. He that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Thus, it is always towards something, which cannot be realised by organising, however perfectly, the resources of the material world, that Christ looks forward, when He

speaks of the Kingdom of God. "We feel," says a recent scientific writer, "that if all possible scientific questions be at last answered, the final problems of life have not been touched at all." It was to those deeper problems of life, that Christ attached primary importance; and He found their solution in the divine element in man, which is the soul. That soul in man, which is one with the divine spirit, gives the ultimate meaning to human life.

Many human interests, which loom large in modern times, would have had but a secondary place in Christ's own standard of values. He was, for instance, supremely indifferent as to whether a man was a Roman, or a Samaritan, or a Jew, so long as he had within his heart a living faith in God. Nationalism, as we understand it, had no place in His teaching. Christ was no Nationalist. The politics of expediency would have shared the same fate of almost open neglect. Christ was no politician. This very question of the tribute money, which was set to entrap Him in the current politics of His times, was immediately brushed on one side. Enquiries, about forms of Government and about property, were left aloof and apart by Christ. When people came to Him, asking Him to arbitrate in a dispute about some property, He exclaimed, "Who made me a judge and a divider over you?" In a word, the machinery of life was always, in His view, subordinate to the life itself. Christ's thoughts were occupied with the wonder and the freedom, the beauty and the dignity, the mystery and the infinitude of the soul, in its direct relation to God.

If Christ had been moving about India from place to place in our own day and generation, as He moved about Palestine of old, He would (so we may reverently imagine) have taken little count of the purely political questions. Such an issue, as that which formed the centre of heated and prolonged controversy quite recently,—the entry or

non-entry into the legislative councils,—would have carried with Him only a minor significance. Debates concerning the temporal sovereignty of the Khalifa would scarcely have interested Him at all. He would have been but little impressed also by the extent and greatness of the British Empire, except to give the salutary warning: "Beware of covetousness."

But I feel quite certain, on the other hand, that He would have been intensely concerned about the 'untouchables' and full of compassion towards them. The oppression of the poor by the rich, the racial arrogance of the powerful, the blindness of the religious leaders,—these things, which touch intimately man's inner spirit, would have called forth His sternest condemnation. I can think of Him as giving a word of good cheer to some hard-working deputy commissioner, albeit a foreigner, just as He praised of old the Roman centurion, whom Christ's own fellow countrymen hated. There would have been a terrible warning given to the charlatans and bigots, who trafficked in spiritual things, whether in church or temple or mosque. On the other hand, the fallen woman in the bazaar would have drawn close to Him without fear of reproach, and He would have found her nearer to the Kingdom of God in their penitence than the self-righteous. He would have loved the solitude of the desert and the silence of the mountain tops and would suddenly have withdrawn Himself, from time to time, for a life of prayer and meditation. The birds of the air and the flowers of the field and the open sky would have been very dear to Him, and dearest of all to His heart would have been the village peasants and the little children with their mothers. With His unquestioning and immediate obedience to God alone, and His uncompromising fearlessness of truth, He would soon have become intolerable to the rulers in Church and State alike. They would, in

the end, have been compelled to put Him out of the way, as an altogether impossible person.

While the great movement of Indian renaissance has been growing in depth and volume, year after year, there has been one constant longing in my heart, which I have tried in different ways and at different times to put into words. This intense longing has been, that I might live to see this new movement in Indian life and thought tending more and more towards the " things that are of God." In other words, I have prayed,—not for India's sake alone, but for the sake of humanity as a whole,—that the merely national and political spheres might not occupy the sole attention of the leaders, but that an open pathway might be found which should lead to a fresh realisation of the vision of God.

For I have felt, with all the strength of slowly formed conviction, which has become more settled every year, that among all the countries of the world in modern times, India has one great gift to offer to the future of the human race, namely, her unbroken religious experience. For India has been hitherto untrammelled by the profound scepticism and practical materialism of modern western thought. India has not lost that intuitional faculty,—that spirit of the child in man,—which can see God face to face and rejoice in His presence.

Other objects have been aimed at by the imposing and commanding civilisation of the West. The ' things that are Caesar's '—world-dominion, wealth, scientific organisation, technical skill,—these have come to the West in abundance. But this attempted domination of the material world has tended to obscure the ' things that are God's.' Christ's saying remains true for all time,—" Children, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ! "

With Mahatma Gandhi, from the very first, I felt that there had come into the world, not only a new saintly personality, but also a new religious message. I had found this to be true in the South African struggle itself. The scene out there reminded me of nothing so much as the early days of the Christian Church, when the disciples of Jesus had everything in common. There was a sweetness and beauty that was inexpressible, amid the sordid lust for gold and racial hatred of the Rand. Never can I forget the first evening, which I spent in his religious retreat, at Phoenix. Mahatma Gandhi was there with the little children round him, whom he loved. One baby girl, an 'untouchable,' nestled in his arms, and shared her place there with a weak little invalid Muhammadan boy. A young Zulu Christian woman had come over from the Zulu mission compound as a most welcome guest, and an elderly Kaffir woman was the friend and servant of us all. European comrades, Mr Polak and Mr Kallenbach, who had been with Mahatma Gandhi in gaol, were there also. Every word that was spoken about General Smuts and the Boers and the British in Natal was kindly and considerate. The only wealth in Phoenix Asram was the wealth of overflowing love.

Again and again, the words of the Acts of the Apostles came back to my mind,—"They that believed were of one heart and one soul, and took their food with gladness, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Name."

The very same principles which had been successfully carried out in the Passive Resistance struggle in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi endeavoured to carry out again in India, both in the Satyagraha (Satyagraha means Truth-force) Movement (in opposition to the Rowlatt Act) and in the Non-co-operation Movement itself.

Can it be truly said, then, that the religious note sounded as clearly in the later Indian Passive Resistance struggle as it did in the earlier struggle in South Africa ?

With regard to Mahatma Gandhi himself, it appears to me to be certain that his work in India has remained essentially religious in its main conception. His purpose throughout has been to use the enthusiasm, created by his personality, as a means of purifying his country from habits of baseness, cowardice and hypocrisy, which were due to a long period of subjection. It was this moral aspect of Swaraj which appealed to him from the very first.

Again, the doctrine of Non-violence which he has preached, he has believed in with all his heart and soul. It has been with him, throughout his life, not merely a negative and passive refusal to commit violence, but far more than this. It has been an active principle of love, in accordance with Christ's command, " love your enemies ; do good to those that hate you." He has carried this principle right through to its conclusion. When acts of violence were committed, twice over,—once during the Panjab disturbances, and once after the mob riot at Chauri Chaura,—he has called off the whole of his aggressive programme, even though from a political standpoint it was suicidal to do so. Nothing could show more clearly than this, that he himself was placing religion first and seeking with all his power to " render unto God the things that are God's."

When, at last, the sentence of six years' imprisonment was passed on him by the ruling Government, it was with a deep joy that he welcomed it. In a letter written to me, he told me that he wished to regard the time spent in gaol as a kind of ' religious retreat.'

Thus, throughout the Satyagraha and the Non-co-operation Movements, as far as Mahatma Gandhi himself

was concerned, there can be little doubt that he wished them to be regarded as in the first place religious, and only secondarily political.

It is true, that the motives of religious truth and political expediency run very close together side by side in much that he has attempted to do; and in spite of his intense desire to serve the truth alone, there have been certain inconsistencies which he himself has not been able to explain and justify to those who have loved him best, even though he was able to reconcile them to his own mind. One of these, which I could never understand, was his recruiting campaign to enlist Indian soldiers to fight against the Turks and Germans, in the year 1918. He has often explained his reasons to me, but I could not understand them. Yet, when all this has been taken into consideration, the facts show clearly by themselves, that when the final test of truth came, the religious motive was at once the strongest with him, and the purely political motive was relentlessly abandoned.

When we turn to the great multitudes who joined in the Non-co-operation Movement, we notice at once a contrast. Religious conviction and freedom from racial passion were sadly missing, except among those who were closest to Mahatma Gandhi himself. The spirit of violence in many districts was hardly concealed. The various forms of boycott employed were often tyrannical.

It has to be acknowledged further, that, in spite of almost superhuman efforts on the part of Mahatma Gandhi, the checks which were placed on these mob passions and violences were only partly successful. The crowds again and again proved uncontrollable under provocation. The message written by the great leader just before his arrest, and published in *Young India*, is a pathetic cry of pain. His acceptance on his own head of the blame for the wrong

done by the crowd, and his request to the Magistrate to award him a heavy punishment for his miscalculation, carry also with them a pathos in their depth of heart anguish. He truly felt these things as his very own, and 'bore the sins of many.'

But when all has been said, as Mahatmaji would have wished it to be said, with all possible sincerity of acknowledgment of mistake, what a glorious struggle it has been! What unknown depths of sacrifice it has called to the surface! What heroism has been displayed in thousands of lives! India is not to-day the country it was two short years ago. Its spirit has been transformed. The enthusiasm of freedom is abroad. Self-respect and manhood have returned. Above all, the religious heart of India has now been profoundly touched, and the future carries with it the promise of a larger hope.

The words of Mr Gokhale must be remembered when he said that India, as she travails in pain to bring to birth the new life, will learn more from hard defeats and failures than from cheap and easy victories. In spite of all lapses, the schooling of a whole people in a new spirit of endurance has gone steadily forward. In the end, through all the lower mists of racial passion and party strife, the light of a high spiritual purpose is beginning to shine clear, and the world outside India will see it from afar and understand. Little by little the religious meaning behind the whole struggle is being understood. The sufferings which have been endured have borne fruit, and the purification which Mahatmaji so earnestly desired has begun.

There is a small book written some years ago by Mr G. Lowes Dickinson, explaining in a very lucid manner the impressions which he had received during a visit of enquiry and research to India, China and Japan. The book is called "An Essay on the Civilisations of India, China

and Japan," and the author deals with India in his opening chapter.

"The first thing," he begins, "I have to note is, that the East is not a unity, as is implied in the familiar antithesis of East and West.

"Between India on the one hand, and China and Japan on the other, there is as great a difference as between India and any Western country. *The contrast that has struck me is that between India and the rest of the world . . . I conceive the dominant note of India to be religion* . . . I think, to the peasants of most countries, religion is no more than a ritual. The people pray for children, pray for healing, pray for rain, pray for everything they want. *But is not religion to Indians something more than this?* Observers, who try to know the people, believe that it is, and I am inclined to think that they are right; that the Indian peasant does really believe, that the true life is a spiritual life; that he respects the saint more than any other man; that he regards the material world as 'unreal,' and all its cares as illusion. He cannot, of course, and does not, put this conviction into practice, or Indian society would come to an end. But he admires and even worships those who do put it into practice. I have seen, on the faces of poor Indians, an expression, at religious functions, which I have seen nowhere else, unless perhaps in Russian Churches."

In a further passage he adds:

"No modern Western man would regard as an admirable type at all,—still less as the highest type,—the man who withdraws from the world to meditate and come into direct contact with the Universal. *But an Indian, who is uncontaminated by Western culture, still regards that as the true ideal of conduct,* and views all activities in the world as lower and inferior, though, for undeveloped men, they are necessary and pardonable." (The italics are mine.)

I leave out of consideration for the moment the slur implied in much that is written above,—a slur which becomes distincter still in other passages of the same book. But anyone who knows at all intimately the remote village

life of India,—that village life which has produced its own long line of Indian saints, seers and mystics,—knows how markedly distinct and significant this intuition of God's presence is, and how men and women also will give up everything to find it.

In only one other country have I read or heard of anything like it, and that is among the peasantry of Russia, on the great open steppes; but of that country and its inhabitants I have no personal experience and therefore cannot speak with any certainty at all. But of India I can truly speak with knowledge. What I do know is simply this, that in India life among the village people is continually breaking forth into a new efflorescence of spiritual beauty. The form which that new life takes may often be strange and unfamiliar. But with all the strangeness of its self-expression, this perpetual consciousness of God's presence in India is a fact. It is an inheritance, which mankind can never afford to lose. It has preserved one supreme aspect of spiritual truth,—the intuitional aspect,—for future generations.

We may contrast all this with another view of life, which is in accord with the temperament of the 'modern western man,'—to use Mr G. Lowes Dickinson's convenient phrase. In Professor W. C. Curtis's recently published work, called "Science and Human Affairs," we have the full picture given to us, showing what it would mean to the world, if the religious motive were evaporated from human experience and the growth of scientific knowledge were taken to be all in all. According to such a view, the perfectibility of the human race, through the steady growth of exact knowledge, is to be the modern equivalent for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. We can see before our eyes to-day how strong is the gravitational pull of the Western mind in that direction, and how difficult it is to resist it. Man's restless

intellect, which has achieved such victories in the material sphere, is ever fashioning anew its own constructive schemes of completed human welfare. It is hard, in the face of all this, to call such schemes 'the things of Caesar,' in contrast with 'the things that are of God'; but such, if abstracted from the deeper truths of religion, they tend to become. In all these programmes, which are put forward with such assurance by modern minds, and with such great sincerity and power, the repeated question of the earliest questioner of the Upanishads,—"What then?"—remains still unanswered. When the whole structure built by modern science is complete,—'what then?'—'what then?'

"What will these things profit which cannot bring immortality?"

This question of Maitreyi, given in one of the earliest Upanishads, is the final test offered to man's own achievement. The infinite in man can never find a resting-place in the finite. The one thirst, which is deepest of all in the human heart, is neither for social well-being, nor for freedom from suffering, but for God and immortality. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,' is the deathless cry of man, wrung from the anguish of death itself. The words were uttered more than three thousand years ago, and still to-day we recognise their essential truth. In the same remote age, and among the same Jewish people, we have the innermost cry of the soul expressed in the following words:

"Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks,
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God."

Of one thing we may be certain. In facing these contrasted views of human life, Christ was on the side of the Indian and the Russian peasant. The Buddha was on their side also. For, in spite of his singularly modern

outlook on human affairs, the Buddha had no illusion about human perfectibility. He did not hold that this material universe, which is for mortal man so full of suffering and evil, could ever be made an adequate and final habitation, that could satisfy the longings of mankind. He had no such easy optimism. He believed only that its burden could be made lighter by the growth of love and compassion, and that there was a noble path which led to the complete cessation of human suffering and the attainment of peace at the last.

Will the 'modern western man' retain his present optimism long, in the light of what is happening everywhere in the world to-day? Is it not significant that the greatest minds of the West are scrutinising and cross-examining afresh that question-begging word 'progress,' and finding it not to be such a stable human conception as once they imagined?

Only in the past few months we have been discovering in the tombs of the Pharaohs, in Egypt, records of science and art and physical well-being, which are compelling us to write our ancient history anew. Will not, among other things, such unmistakable portents of our own age as the vast growth of population, and the increasing desiccation of the land surface of the globe, make us revise some of our ideas concerning the future, and accept the truth of St. Paul's saying, that, if in this life only we had hope, we should be of all men most miserable?

The basal problems of man's existence upon the earth are the very same as those which confronted the Buddha, when he was young, and drove him forth from his own personal comfort and happiness in search of an answer. Death, sickness, old age,—these are still with us to-day; and the 'modern western man' has not been able to produce any elixir of immortality. Indeed, by a strange fatality it

would appear as if, along with every increase in physical comfort, some fresh nerve-racking tension were destined to bring about a new capacity for pain. The suicide rate is strikingly large among the races which have accepted modern civilisation. Europe in August 1914 had brought scientific efficiency in social and industrial life to a greater pitch of perfection than had ever been known before, but in a true sense she was undone by her own material achievements. Mr. Arthur Lupton has recently been lecturing to the Indian Students' Union, in London, on the subject: "Happy India, as it might be if guided by modern science." We seem to hear, in the very title of the lecture, the note of early Victorian optimism over again, and we wonder how it could possibly have survived the screeching of the bomb and the death rattle of the aeroplane in the recent European War.

What are we to say then? Are the 'things of Caesar' of no account at all? Is the political field of life to be discarded? Is modern science itself to be abandoned? Are we to dam up the fountains of new knowledge and to allow mankind to remain, just as it exists to-day, in all its squalor and ignorance? Are we to make no effort at all to improve the material lot of the human race?

By no means. Christ tells us to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.' The material things of life have their own important but secondary place. Christ and Buddha and the great prophets of humanity were no obscurantists. They were the heralds of a new intellectual freedom. They welcomed any fresh light upon the problem of existence, wherever they found it. But it was in the soul of man, as I have said, that they themselves found the light shining most brightly; and they were not mistaken. In every age they have asserted, with inner conviction, the supreme truth of the divine element in man; and their testimony cannot be rejected with impunity.

There is one story in the Gospels which explains, more clearly than a long argument can do, the point at issue. We read how Christ came one day to the house of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. Mary sat at Christ's feet, silently drinking in His words. Martha, on the other hand, was 'cumbered about much serving,'—that is to say, she was busily engaged with all the household concerns. When she saw Mary sitting silent, she was annoyed and asked Jesus to rebuke her and to bid her to help in preparing the food. But Jesus replied: "Martha, Martha, thou art busy with many things. But Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her."

The West to-day is 'cumbered about much serving.' It is 'busy with many things,'—so busy that it has no time to listen to the voice of God speaking silently within the soul. It is apt to rebuke the East, which sits in contemplation, and to regard such a life of silent meditation as of no value to mankind. But that is not Christ's view. "Mary hath chosen the *better* part," Christ says to Martha, "and it shall not be taken from her."

What is surely needed, in our modern age, is this, that while we press forward with each fresh conquest of science in the material sphere, we should learn also to understand the essential limitations of the scientific mind, when abstracted from the other faculties of man. For if this is not clearly understood, we are certain to find over and over again disheartenment and disappointment. We must not abandon the spiritual in our nature, in order to grasp at every fresh material success. We must refuse to throw away that pearl of great price, which has been entrusted to the human race, through countless ages of the past, to cherish as its dearest possession. We need to remember, that when every branch of modern science has been explored by modern methods, there is still waiting for us, if we will but

hearken and understand, an age-long wisdom, deep within the heart, which speaks of God and immortality, and has power to console us in the solemn hour of death. This wisdom is the supreme heritage of man, which needs to be preserved from age to age with the utmost care ; for without this all is dark.

"The days of our age are threescore years and ten,
And though one be so strong that he come to fourscore years,
Yet is his strength then but labour and sorrow,
So soon passeth it away, and we are gone.
Lord, teach us to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

These were the words of a singer in Israel uttered in the dawn of human history ; and still we feel the sovereign truth of them, as we read them at the time of burial by the side of the open grave. To apply our hearts to the wisdom of God, this is the supreme duty of man.

Might we not add further, that there is at the very centre of the universe an inner law at work, mysterious, profound, contradicting all our ordinary calculations,—a law of sacrifice, a law of life renewed through death itself ? Christ seemed to have penetrated its mystery, when He said :

"He that shall lose his life, the same shall save it ;
And he that shall save his life, shall lose it."

This law of sacrifice, of life renewed through death, is true, not only of individuals, but also of nations and peoples. India, that has recklessly thrown away its life, time after time, in its passionate search after religious truth, has survived ; while empires like Babylon, which mapped out large and wide, in every direction, their plans for material advancement, sacrificing the soul in the process, have utterly perished. India has risen again and again from the dead, owing to her unquenchable faith in God. Babylon has fallen, never to rise again.

To-day, I could imagine no more wonderful hope for India than that she should become, what I would dare to call, a 'Christ' among the nations. I would desire, in deep veneration for her history, to see her prepared to refuse the kingdoms of the material world, if only her heart might be set unwaveringly upon the Kingdom of God. I would see her, in these modern times, when men's hearts are failing them for fear of future conflicts, joyfully prepared to suffer outward defeat rather than join any more in internecine bloodshed on God's earth. I would long to see her throw aside, once and for all, any attempt at outward rivalry with the proud nations of the West in material power, if only her own sacred spiritual mission might be fulfilled.

In earlier years I had hoped and prayed that these very things might be witnessed in my own nation; but the hard realism of what I have seen abroad, in the colonies and the dominions, and the cruel race arrogance and commercial greed which are in the ascendant in the West, have shattered any hopes I had and strewn them in the dust. Since that day, I have learnt to look more and more towards India for their fulfilment; and of late I have wistfully turned to Russia also. For, in spite of desperate and heart-breaking failures, and in spite also of unchecked tyranny of man over man in India itself, I believe that the soul of India retains an idealism which the West in modern days has overlaid and obscured. I believe also that, in India, the light of the vision of God still shines among the poorest of the poor. For, through all her humiliations and defeats, India has not forgotten that the spiritual life is supreme.

While, in my spare moments, after famine relief work was over, I have been engaged in writing down these thoughts in this district of North Bengal, I have often watched the daily life of the villagers around me. Their

quiet patience and faith in God have gone home to my heart in a way almost too deep for tears. For I have seen, in these kindly, lowly people, a heroism in the face of suffering and death, which has made me bow my head in reverence and worship to the Supreme, who has given such spiritual strength to the humblest of men.

It has seemed to me, while I have looked on and watched their silent endurance, that a fresh meaning has been given to the words of Christ: "I thank thee, O Heavenly Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. . . . Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

It is this inner peace which the restless soul of the modern world so sorely needs in the midst of all its piled-up wealth of material resources. Only to the heart, that is simple and child-like and restful, can the unclouded vision of God be revealed. The fret and fever of life in the West have ruffled the surface of the lake, and the image of God can no longer be clearly and distinctly seen. But in this ancient village life of India, where man grows up with nature and the seasons come and go, the peace of God is still retained in the heart and men believe simply and sincerely. Even in the midst of this present weariness and want and death, there is a remarkable serenity of soul.

'It is the will of God.'—'It is His will.'—The men with whom I have talked have uttered these words to me again and again, as I have gone from village to village. They have reminded me of the crowning words of Dante: 'In His will is our peace.'

It was to help them that the famine relief workers came,

and the villagers have been very grateful; but I have felt each time, when I have gone back to live among them, that I have been the receiver rather than the giver: for they have given me a fresh inner strength and hope. They have taught me anew to 'render unto God the things that are of God.'

APPENDIX II

THE SONG OF THE DEFEATED

(Taken from Rabindranath Tagore's "Fruit-Gathering" by permission of the Author.)

MY Master has bid me while I stand at the roadside, to sing the song of Defeat, for that is the bride whom He woos in secret.

She has put on the dark veil, hiding her face from the crowd, but the jewel glows on her breast in the dark.

She is forsaken of the day, and God's night is waiting for her with its lamps lighted and flowers wet with dew.

She is silent with her eyes downcast; she has left her home behind her, from her home has come that wailing in the wind.

But the stars are singing the love-song of the eternal to a face sweet with shame and suffering.

The door has been opened in the lonely chamber, the call has sounded, and the heart of the darkness throbs with awe because of the coming tryst.

261.15
An26

Andrews, C.F.

Christ and labor

18 MAY 1925	Grant	28 MAY 1925			
3/4/54	Canned	MR 1 - 54			

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